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HISTORY

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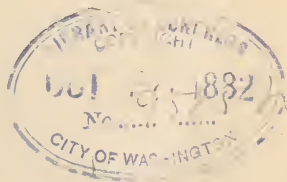
A History of the Associate Presbyterian

AND

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES.

BY  
REV. ROBERT LATHAN, D. D.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCH has had an organic existence for one hundred years. Still its origin and history are scarcely known to any outside of its pale, and but poorly known to many inside. The reason of this is obvious. No continuous history of the denomination has ever been given to the world. Sketches of detached portions have, on various occasions, been published, but the Church as a whole has no written history. The Synod of the South has been singularly neglected, in that no one has either had the time, or the means, or the inclination to trace its rise and progress. The following is an effort to supply a long-felt want. The attempt has been made to trace the history of the Associate Reformed Church from its rise in the first Secession, in 1733, under the Erskines, down to the present time. The facts have been gleaned from every source accessible. Neither expense nor labor have been regarded. The principal authorities consulted and drawn upon are McKerrow's History of the Secession, Gibb's Display, Reid's History of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, Hetherington's History of the Church of Scotland, Struther's History of Scotland, Woodrow's History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, Hetherington's History of the Westminster Assembly, Bailie's Letters and Journal, Crookshank's Works, besides a number of minor works.

In that part which refers more immediately to the history of the formation of the Associate Reformed Church, and especially to the history of the Synod of the South, the principal authorities are the original documents. The minutes of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, the minutes of the Associate Reformed Synod, the minutes of the General Synod, the minutes of the Synod of the South, and the various deliverances made by these ecclesiastical bodies, have been relied upon for facts. In addition to these, recourse was had to old, musty pamphlets which had long since found a resting place in garrets and waste-boxes.



## PREFACE.

An effort was made, with what success we cannot say, to render each part complete in itself, and at the same time to preserve the unity of the parts. This involved a considerable amount of repetition.

To a number of individuals, the author desires to return his sincere thanks for favors. To Drs. John Forsyth, Joseph T. Cooper and Thomas Sproul, he is under many obligations; but especially he is under obligations to Dr. James B. Scouller, of Newville, Pa. From Dr. James Boyce, of Due West, S. C., he received much valuable aid and encouragement. It would be an act of lasting ingratitude were he not to mention his indebtedness to Dr. R. A. Ross, his co-Presbyter, who, hour after hour, sat patiently hearing the manuscript read.

Whether the work is a success or failure, the author cannot tell. The reader must judge. Its preparation has been a work of great labor, but of intense delight. Should it prove worthy of public support, it will be followed by another volume, containing a history of each of the congregations in the Associate Reformed Synod, and a biographical sketch of all its ministers, both living and dead.

R. L.

YORKVILLE, S. C.





# TABLE OF CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

Divisions in the Church—The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church—History of the Associate Presbytery—Its Adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith—Origin not a Difficulty about Communion or Psalmody—The Relief Church—Church of Scotland Previous to 1733—Recissory Act—Presbyterian Ministers Ejected—Presbyterians Forbidden to Preach—James II. Abdicated the Throne—"Killing Time"—William of Orange—General Assembly Meets—Presbyterianism Restored—Its Character—Cameronians—Causes which Led to the Organization of Associate Presbytery—Christianity Introduced into Scotland—Form of Church Government—Donald I. Baptized—Druids Succeeded by the Culdees—Paladius Sent to Scotland—Lollards of Kyle—Culdees Suppressed—The Reformation—First Confession of Faith—Revolutionary Settlement—Its Defects—The Society Folk—Cameron and Cargill—Declaration of the Cameronians—Results of Secession—The Second Cause of Secession—Church of Scotland Calvinistic—Doctrinal Notions of those who Composed it after the Revolutionary Settlement—Bishop Burnet's Statement—Character of Presbyterian Ministers—The Auchterarder Proposition—Craig Refuses to Subscribe it—Professor Simson's Doctrines—General Assembly Favor Him—He is not Censured.—**p. 5 to p. 26.**

## CHAPTER II.

"Marrow" Controversy—The Author of "The Marrow of Modern Divinity"—Introduced into Scotland—Republished by Rev. James Hog—Excited Great Opposition—Severely Criticised by Principal Haddow—Defended by Thomas Boston—Commission of the General Assembly—"The Marrow of Modern Divinity" Referred to the Commission—Action of the Commission—Summon before them Hog, Hamilton, Brisbane and Warden—Report of the Commission—"The Marrow of Modern Divinity" Condemned by the Assembly—The Effect upon the People—Attempt to Again Bring the Matter before the Assembly—"Marrow" Men called "Representers"—Summoned Before the Commission—Twelve Questions—Answers—Characters of the Answers.—**p. 27 to p. 61.**

## CHAPTER III.

The Effect of the "Marrow" Controversy on the Church—Professor Simson Denies the Necessary Existence of Jesus Christ—Is Tried by the Presbytery of Glasgow—His Case is Brought before the General Assembly—Charges all Proved—The Church Greatly Corrupted—Blasphemous Doctrines—Professor Simson's Case Ended, 1729—Many were Grieved on Account of the Leniency Shown Him by the Assembly—The "Marrow" Men Protest—Effect Nothing—Patronage—Its Origin—Presbyterian Mode of Settling Vacant Congregations—The Manner Previous to the Secession—Patronage Law Revived by Charles II.—Abolished in 1688—Restored in 1711—Clergy in Favor of the Patronage Act—The Assembly Appoints "Riding Committees" to Settle Pastors—The "Riding Committees" Call out the Military to Assist Them—The Overture of 1731 Designed to Crush out the Rights of the People—The Overture Rejected by the Presbyteries, but Adopted by the General Assembly—Character of the General Assembly—The Overture the Proximate Cause of the Secession—Robert Stark Forcibly Placed over the Congregation of Kinross—Ebenezer Erskine's Sermon—Adam Ferguson Moved the Appointing of a Committee to Consider the Sermon—Objection Stated by the Committee—Sermon Published—The Objectionable Passages Scriptural—Mr. Erskine Defends



Himself—The Kingship of Christ Offensive to the Majority—Mr. Erskine's Definition of a Call—Adheres to his Notes—Mr. Erskine Censured by the Synod of Perth and Sterling—Twelve Ministers and two Elders Protest—Mr. Erskine is Ordered to be Rebuked in April—He Refuses to be Rebuked and Presents a Paper—General Assembly met in May, 1733—Mr. Erskine's Protest Brought Before the Assembly—The Assembly Order Mr. Erskine to be Rebuked—He Declared he Could not Submit—Protests of Wilson, Monierieff and Fisher—Assembly Refused to Hear the Protest Read—Protest Fell on the Floor—Is Read by Naesmith—Excitement in the Assembly—Protesters Sent for—Act of 1732—Protesters Brought Before the Assembly—Ordered Before the Commission in August—The Protesters Appear Before the Commission—Are not Permitted to Defend Themselves—Division in the Commission—Protesters Suspended—Intense Interest Felt Throughout Scotland—Petitions Sent to the Commission—Commission Meet in November, 1733—Higher Censure Inflicted by the Commission upon the Protesters—The Protesters Received the Sympathy of Many in the Church—They did not Secede, but were Violently Thrust Out—Meet at Gairney Bridge and Organize the Associate Presbytery.—**p. 62 to p. 89.**

#### CHAPTER IV.

Reformed Presbyterians Called by Different Names: Covenanters, Cameronians, Society People and Strict Presbyterians—Covenanters not Distinctive—The Church of Scotland a Covenanting Church—Frequently Entered into Covenant with God—Fluctuations in the Church of Scotland—First Reformation—Caldees Suppressed—Moral Darkness—Lollards of Kyle—First Confession of Faith—National Covenant—Presbyterianism Established by Act of Parliament—Elizabeth Died—James VI. Becomes King—English Dissenters—Millenary Petition—Hamp-ton Court—James Abuses the Puritans—Character of James—Westminster Assembly—Confession of Faith Ratified by the Church of Scotland—Charles I. Put to Death—Charles II. Crowned—Cromwell Dies—Charles II. Brought Back—"Killing Period"—Origin of Reformed Presbyterians—Parties in the Church of Scotland—Charles Exhumes the Bones of Cromwell, Ireton and Bradshaw—Apprehends the Marquis of Argyle—Argyle Put to Death—Guthrie Executed—Rescissory Act Passed—Drinking Parliament—Three Thousand Ministers Ejected—Twenty Thousand Presbyterians Put to Death—Cameronians would Make no Compromise—Rise of the Strict Presbyterians, 1679—Order to Apprehend Welsh, Cameron, Douglass and Kid—Murder of Archbishop Sharp—Persecutions on Account of Robert Hamilton—Rutherglen Declaration—Battle of Drumclog—Bothwell Bridge—Queensferry Paper—The Three Presbyterian Ministers, Cameron, Cargill and Douglass—Cameron Killed, 1680—Cargill Executed, 1681—Society People Send Young Men to Holland to Receive Ordination—Alexander Peden, James Renwick, Alexander Shields, Thomas Boyd and David Houston—Peden's Body Exhumed and Insulted—Renwick, the Last of the Scotch Martyrs—Cameronian Principles—Prince of Orange—Linning, Boyd and Shields Join the National Church—Houston Without Influence—Religious Instruction Among the Society People—First Meeting of the Society.—**p. 90 to p. 105.**

#### CHAPTER V.

Reformed Presbyterians, Continued—The Rev. John McMillan Adopts the Sentiments of the Cameronians—Is Deposed—Covenanters Improperly Called McMillanites—McMillan's Congregation Cling to Him—General Meeting of the Society People, in October, 1706—Call Presented to Mr. McMillan—Begins his Pastoral Labors in 1707—Union of England and Scotland—Society People Opposed the Union—The Rev. John McNeil Joins the Society People—Protestation and Testimony of the United Societies—Sanquhar Declaration—Objections to the Union of England and Scotland—Protestation and Appeal—Religious and Political Parties in Scotland—Friends of the Pretenders and Foes of the House of Hanover—Renewing the Covenants—The Rev. John McMillan Defective as an Organizer—John McNeil Never Ordained—Efforts to Organize a Presbytery—Adamson, McHenry, Taylor and Gilchrist Deposed—Society People Attempt to Form a Union with Them—Also, with the "Marrow" Men—Thomas Nairn Leaves the Associate



Presbytery and Joins the Society People—The Reformed Presbytery Constituted August 1st, 1743—Nairn Returns to the National Church—Doctrines of the Society People—Political Opinions—Covenanters Come to America—Sent to New Jersey—Lord Pitlochy—Covenanters Scatter Over the Country—Their Number and Places of Residence in Scotland—Begin to Emigrate to America—Form Societies in America—First General Meeting at Middle Octoraro, March 4th, 1744—Covenanters Joined by Rev. Alexander Craighead—Mr. Craighead's Difficulties—His Congregation Called "Craighead Society"—Mr. Craighead Publishes a Pamphlet—Thomas Cookson Complains to the Synod of Philadelphia—The Synod Condemn the Pamphlet—The Rev. John Cuthbertson Comes to America—Mr. Cuthbertson's Labors—First Communion—The Rev. Alexander McDowell and Mr. Cuthbertson Labor Together—Revs. Linn and Dobbin Come to America—Reformed Presbytery Constituted—Synod Organized—Division in the Synod.—**p. 106 to p. 118.**

## CHAPTER VI.

Associate Presbytery Unpopular—A few Ministers in the National Church Friends of the Associate Presbytery—The Erskine Party Loosed from their Pastoral Relations—The Dominant Party Frightened—Acts of Assembly Annulled—Popular Movement—Assembly's Act in Reference to the Return of the Erskine Party—Synod of Perth and Stirling Restore the Seceders—Ebenezer Erskine Elected Moderator—People Desired the Secession Party to Return—Established Church—The Secession Party Could not Return—Mr. Wilson Perplexed—Seceders Summoned Before the Assembly—Appear as a Presbytery—Their Declinature—Action of the Assembly—Seceders Reluctantly Leave the Established Church—They had no Alternative—Mr. John Hunter Licensed—Andrew Clarkson Licensed—Thomas Nairn Joins the Associate Presbytery—John Hunter Ordained—He Dies in 1740—James Thompson Joins the Associate Presbytery—James Mair and Adam Beugo Join the Associate Presbytery—They are Ordained Ministers in 1740—Growth of the Associate Presbytery—Strict Discipline—No Patronage—No Ruling Elders for Four Years—First Elders—Presbyterian Order—Theological Professor Chosen.—**p. 119 to p. 131.**

## CHAPTER VII.

Important Facts Connected With the History of Associate Presbytery—Associate Synod Organized—Burgess Oath—Controversy Respecting Nairn Difficulty—Nairn Joins Cameronians—Returns to the National Church—Design of the Burgess Oath—American Government—Cameronians and Seceders Quarrel—Division in the Associate Synod—Anti-Burghers and Burghers—Number of Anti-Burghers—Of Burghers—Reunion and Formation of the United Associate Synod—Number of Ministers—Union of Secession Synod of Ireland and Synod of Ulster—Union of the United Secession and Relief Synod—Formation of the *United Presbyterian Church*—Strength of the United Presbyterian Church—Growth of the Associate Church—Its Missionary Character—Call for Laborers from Ireland—First Ministers Sent to America—Rev. Gilbert Tennant—Rev. John Moorhead—Organization of the Presbyterian Church in America—Nativity of its Ministers—Congregational Element—Old Side and New Side—Journal of Whitfield—Belfast Society—First Petition for Preaching in America by Seceders—Alexander Craighead—Organization of the Synod of Philadelphia—Adopting Act—Misunderstanding Concerning.—**p. 132 to p. 145.**

## CHAPTER VIII.

Gellatly and Arnot Come to America—Their Instructions—Seceder Societies—Hume and Jamieson Appointed to go to America—Andrew Bunyan Deprived of his License—Good Effect—Condition of America in 1751—Bunyan Restored—Apostolic Plan "by two and two"—Gellatly and Arnot Solicited to Join the Presbyterian Church—Stigmatized as Schismatics—Warning Published—Delop's Pamphlet—Controversy About the Nature of Faith and the Gospel Offer—Ralph Erskine's View—Finley and Smith and Gellatly and Arnot Controversy—Mr. Gellatly Settles as Pastor—Arnot Returns to Scotland—James Proudfoot Arrives in



America—Settles at Pequa—Removes to Salem—Mission Station of Associate Synod—Matthew Henderson Comes to America—Settles at Oxford—John Mason, Robert Amman and John Smart Come to America—Mason Settles in New York; Amman at Marsh Creek—Smart Returns to Scotland—William Marshall Comes to America—Receives Three Calls—Occasions a Difficulty in the Presbytery—Mr. Henderson Dissents—Mr. Marshall Settles at Deep Run.—**p. 146 to p. 155.**

## CHAPTER IX.

Pastoral Charges in 1765—All Anti-Burghers—Thomas Clark First Burgher Minister who Came to America—Birth and Education of Mr. Clark—Licensed and Sent to Ireland—Settles at Ballybay—Main, Black and Clark Constitute Associate Presbytery of Down—Presbytery of Moyrah and Lisburn—History of Thomas Clark—Fought Against the Pretender—Difficulties in Ireland—Thrust into Prison—Forced to Leave the Country—In Company with Three Hundred Members of his Congregation Comes to America—Reasons for Leaving Ireland—Solicited by Friends to Come to America—Opened a Correspondence with the Hon. Robert Harper—Obtains a Grant of Land—Part of his Congregation Settle in South Carolina; the Other Part in New York—The Turner Grant—Erected a Church in 1766—67—Secession of the Church—Dr. Clark Visited South Carolina in 1769—Resigns the Pastorate of Salem, 1782, and Settles at Cedar Spring in 1786—Dr. Clark and the Anti-Burghers Coalesce in 1765—The Coalescence Disapproved by all Anti-Burgher Synod—Kinlock and Telfair Sent to America—Join the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania—John Smith and John Rodgers Sent by the Anti-Burgher Synod to Dissolve the Union of the Burghers and Anti-Burghers in America—Take their Seats as Presbyters—Burgher Congregations in America.—**p. 156 to p. 164.**

## CHAPTER X.

Negotiations Looking to an Union of the Associates and Reformed Presbyterians—Division of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania—Revolutionary War—Spirit of Ecclesiastical Union—Proposition for Union in 1754; Again in 1769—Negotiations Cease—Political Disturbances Drew the Associates and Covenanters Nearer Together—Their Differences Only Political—Covenanters Opposed by all Denominations—Associates and Covenanters Warmly Espouse the Cause of the Colonies—Reasons why the Associates and Covenanters Should Unite—Anti-Burghers More Numerous than the Burghers—Burghers More Tolerant—Ministers Educated in Scotland—Membership from Ireland—Scotch-Irish—Two Classes of Scotch-Irish—Membership of the Presbyterian Church—Corruptions of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland—Belfast Society—Character of the Irish Seceders—Irish, English and Scotch Presbyterianism—Seceders Scotch Presbyterians—Difference between Associates and Covenanters—Occupied the Same Territory—Cultivate Each Other's Friendship—First Meeting for Conference—Both Cautious—Second Meeting for Conference—The Matter Brought Before the Associate Presbytery—Overture by Rev. Murray—Associate Presbytery Met at Middle Octoraro—Spend Two Days in Conference—Principle Subjects Discussed by the Conference—Basis of Union—Conference Met at Pequa, Pa.—Some of the Associates Opposed to the Union on Any Terms—Conference Meets at Big Spring—Basis of Union Discussed—Charges Made—Warm Discussion—New Proposition Drawn Up—Basis of Union Adopted by Presbytery of New York, 1780; by Reformed Presbytery, 1781; by Presbytery of Pennsylvania, 1782—James Clarkson and William Marshall Refuse to go into the Union—Clarkson and Marshall Continue the Associate Presbytery—Associate Reformed Synod Organized—Names of those Composing the Associate Reformed Synod—Andrew Patton—James Martin—William Martin—Object Designed to be Effected by the Union—Result of the Union the Formation of Another Denomination—The Prosperity of the Associate Presbytery Continued to Exist for Seventy-six Years—The Covenanters Send to Scotland for Ministers—Covenanters Still Exist—The Effect of the Covenanters and Seceders on the American Government.—**p. 165 to p. 184.**



## CHAPTER XI.

Presbyteries Rearranged—New Names Given Them—Presbytery of Londonderry—Its Members—Character of the Congregations in Connection With the Presbytery of Londonderry—Synod Disclaim all Responsibility for its Acts—Joins the Synod of Albany—Organization of the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia—Organization of the Presbyteries Previous to 1822—Four Synods Organized—First Meeting of the General Synod—Members Present—Education of Candidates for the Ministry—Theological Seminary Founded—John M. Mason Sent to Europe in Behalf of the Theological Seminary—His Success—Returns Home Accompanied by Five Ministers and One Probationer—John M. Mason Chosen Professor of Theology—Other Theological Seminaries in America—Growth of the General Synod—Disturbing Elements—Associate Reformed Church in a Formative State—Confession of Faith Adopted in 1799—Sections of the Scotch Confession Not Adopted—Finally Amended—Deliverance of the Synod Concerning Testimonies—The Little Constitution—Westminster Confession of Faith Defective—Not Adopted as a Whole by the Associate Reformed Church—First and Second Books of Discipline—Changes Made in the Westminster Confession of Faith by the Associate Reformed Church—The Overture Published—Its Object—Matthew Henderson Withdraws—Diversity of Opinions Among the Fathers of the Associate Reformed Church—John Smith's Difficulty—Judicial Testimonies Demanded—Synod Refused to Prepare a Testimony—Confession of Faith of the Associate Reformed Church.—p. 185 to p. 203.

## CHAPTER XII.

Disturbances Growing Out of the Unsettled State of the Church—The First Insubordinate Act—Londonderry Presbytery—David Annan Admits Samuel Taggart and then Ordains William Morrison—The Synod Pronounced the Act Irregular, but the Ordination Valid—"The Presbytery of the Eastward" Coalesces With the Londonderry Presbytery—The Members of this New Organization Rarely Attend Synod—Soon Began to Show Signs of Laxity—Congregational in Their Notions—A Committee Appointed to Visit the Presbytery—Wrote a Letter—Nature of the Presbytery's Irregularities—Mr. Morrison's Reply to the Letter of the Committee—Its Fallacies—Declared Insubordinate by the Synod—Associate Reformed Presbyterianism Ceased to Exist in New England—Revived in 1846 by Dr. Blaikie—The Reformed Dissenting Presbytery—Its Origin and History—United With the Associate Church in 1851—Difficulty in the Presbytery of New York—Fast Days and Thanksgiving Days—Dr. John M. Mason's Course—The Difficulty Arranged, but Not Satisfactorily to All—FREQUENT COMMUNION—Custom of the Church of Scotland—Dr. John M. Mason's Letters—Dr. Mason's Ability—Social Position—Made a Mistake—Men Obey Custom Rather Than Law—Dr. Mason Excited Suspicion—John Smith Soured—Mason and Proudfoot—Dr. Mason an Innovator and Censurable.—p. 204 to p. 212

## CHAPTER XIII.

Associate Reformed Church Began to Grow and Decline at the Same Time—Ministers Lose Confidence in Each Other—Causes Which Led to the Final Dissolution of the *General Synod*—The Psalmody Question—Its History in Connection with the Presbyterian Church in the United States—Watts' Imitations First Allowed; then Watts' Hymns—Finally, Both Watts and Rouse Practically Laid Aside—History of Rouse's Version of the Psalms—The Scotch Version—The Metre of Rouse's Version—Rouse's Version Amended and Adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland—History of Uninspired Hymns—Paraphrases Allowed by the Church of Scotland—Their Character—Practice of the Covenanters—Practice of the Presbyterian Church Prior to 1753—The Result of Introducing Watts's Version—The History of Watts' Version—His Design as Stated by Himself—His Preface to his Imitations—Remarkable Production—His Hymns—Offensive to Many—Those Who Had Been Persecuted by Kings of England Could Not Sing Them—Rouse's Version—What is Claimed for it—Its Poetic Excellence—The Doctrine of the Associate Reformed Church Concerning Psal-



modity—Not a Version, but the Psalms—Psalmody Practically Divides the Associate Reformed Church and all Hymn-singing Churches—A Tendency in the Associate Reformed Church to Follow the Multitude—Marshall's Sermon on Psalmody—The Associate Reformed Church Took Higher Ground on Psalmody than that Occupied by the Church of Scotland—Section in Confession of Faith on "Singing of Psalms"—The Section Quoted—Trouble About the Change Proposed in Paragraph 2 of Section III.—**p. 213 to p. 224.**

## CHAPTER XIV.

The Communion Question—The Londonderry Presbytery—Dr. Mason's Difficulty Complicated—Dr. Mason's Reasons for Resigning his Charge—His Labors—Purpose Thwarted by the Trustees of the Congregation—With a Colony Began to Establish a Third Congregation in New York—Had Difficulty to Get a Place of Worship—Was Granted Conditionally Dr. Romeyn's Church—The Offer Accepted—Dr. Mason's Preaching—The Effect Upon the Two Congregations—They Commune Together—The Case Came Before the General Synod—Dr. Mason's Statements Respecting His Course—The Doctrine of the Associate Reformed Church Respecting the Communion of Saints—The XXV<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith—The Little Constitution—Doctrine of the Early Seceders and Covenanters Respecting the Communion of Saints—Wilson Quoted—Shields Quoted—Gellatly Quoted—The Narrative Quoted—The State of Things when the Associate Reformed Synod was Organized—No Brotherly Love—This Had Been the Case Since 1679—The Burghers and Anti-Burghers—Practically, There Was No Such Thing as Occasional Communion Prior to 1819—Its Lawfulness Admitted by the Associate Reformed Church—The Occasional Communion of the Associate Reformed Fathers Not the Modern, Catholic Communion—Dr. Mason's Peculiar Circumstances—His Act was Contrary to Custom, but not to Law—The Case of Messrs. Matthews and Clark—All Tried Together—This Unfortunate—Resolution Passed—General Dissatisfaction—Dr. Mason Preaches for Dr. Romeyn—Uses Watts' Psalms—Clear Violation of Law—Mr. Clark Censurable—The Vote in the Case—No One Satisfied—The Parties Disposed to be Extremists.—**p. 225 to p. 237.**

## CHAPTER XV.

Result of the Action of the Synod in Mason, Matthews and Clarke Case—Parties Lose Confidence in Each Other—The General Synod "Intermit the Functions of the Subordinate Synods"—General Synod Always Meets at Philadelphia—The Synods of the South and West Practically Excluded—Remonstrances Against the Action of the General Synod of 1811 by These—Synod of Scioto Withdrew in 1820—Synod of the Carolinas Became Independent in 1822—Synod of New York Never Meets—A Majority of the People Opposed to the Course Pursued by General Synod—The Result, Had the Matter Been Submitted to a Popular Vote—Correspondence Between the Synod of Scioto and the Synod of the South—The Condition of the Associate Reformed Church—Synod of the South Appoint a Fast Day—The Bishop-Rankin Difficulty—Settled to the Satisfaction of Neither Party—Character of Messrs. Bishop and Rankin—The Psalmody and Communion Question the Real Cause of the Difficulty Between Messrs. Bishop and Rankin—Dr. Mason's Plea—Mr. Rankin's Reply—The Downward Tendency of the General Synod—The Psalmody Question Revived—Ebenezer Clarke's Resolutions—A New Version of the Psalms Called For by a Few—The Reformed Dutch Version Allowed—The Union Spirit—Negotiations with the Reformed Dutch—This Broken Up by Similar Negotiations with the General Assembly—A Union Formed with the General Assembly—Basis and Condition of this Union—The Vote on Union—No Union Actually Formed—Names of the Ministers Going into the Union—The Theological Library Removed to Princeton—Law Suit for its Recovery—Library Restored in 1837.—**p. 238 to p. 252.**



## CHAPTER XVI.

The United Presbyterian Church—Its Organization—The Time and Place of the Organization—Strength of the United Presbyterian Church—Present Strength—Number of Presbyteries, Synods, Families, Communicants, Ministers and the Territory of the United Presbyterian Church—Foreign Missions—Basis of Union—Doctrines of the United Presbyterian Church—Number of Psalm-singing Churches in America—All Divided.—**p. 253 to p. 255.**

## CHAPTER XVII.

Synod of the Carolinas—Present Territory—Former Limits—The Grant of Charles II. in 1663—Territory Visited by Cabot, 1497—Claimed by the English, Spaniards and French—Spanish Attempt a Settlement in 1525—Admiral Coligny's Grant in 1562—Rebuilt Built Fort Carolina—Fort Carolina Destroyed by the Spaniards—Carolina Became the Property of the King in 1719—Divided into North and South Carolina in 1729—Georgia Settled in 1733—North Carolina, in 1653—South Carolina, in 1670—State of Things in England at That Time—Liberty of Conscience Granted by the Charters—Design Was to Establish Prelacy—Was Legally Established—Covenanters Banished from Scotland to America—Some Came to Carolina—Their Principal Settlements—William Martin's Field of Labor—Petitions Sent from Carolina to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, in 1760—Proudfoot, Mason, Martin, Rodgers, Patten and Clark Sent to the Societies in Carolina—Martin Received a Call from Fourth Creek, in 1774—The Associate Ministers from 1782 to 1799—The Rev. Thomas Clark Comes South in 1782—Returned North in 1783—The Rev. John Jamieson Comes South—Places of Preaching—Dr. Clark Returned to the South, and in 1786 Became Pastor of Cedar Spring and Long Cane—John Boyse Began to Preach at Coddle Creek, Gilead, Prosperity and Hopewell, in 1788—The Covenanters Visited by James Reid in 1790—McGarrah and King Come to South Carolina—Donnelly Licensed and Ordained—Covenanters Emigrate on Account of Slavery—Brick Church Grave-yard.—**p. 256 to p. 275.**

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Facts of the Last Chapter—Petitions to the Presbyterian Church—Presbyterian Missionaries—The Conclusion Likely to be Reached—First Presbyterian Minister Sent to North Carolina—Presbyterian Settlers of North Carolina—Cape Fear Settlers—Scotch Settlers of 1746-47—Their History—Battle of Culloden—Duke of Cumberland—George II.—The Scotch and the Pretender—Conditions on which the Prisoners were Pardon—Bladen County Settlement—Other Scotch and Scotch-Irish Settlements—The Harmony of the Presbyterians, Associates and Covenanters, in North Carolina—Effects of the Difficulties with England—The Lay Members of the Church of Scotland Always Friendly—Soundness in the Faith—In What it Consisted—Introduction of Watts' Imitation of the Psalms—Its Effects—The Scotch-Irish of North Carolina—Two Classes of Scotch-Irish—Their Origin and Difference—The Frequency of Petitions from Virginia and North Carolina—The Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania—From Whom These Petitions Came—Not Presbyterians—Associates in Virginia—Their Location—Coalesce with the Presbyterian Church.—**p. 276 to p. 281.**

## CHAPTER XIX.

Emigration, After the War, from Ireland—The Old Irish Volunteer—Emigrants from the Churches of Ballynahinch, Killeleagh and Ahoghill—Their Certificates—Emigrants Settle in South Carolina—Rev. Peter McMullan Comes to America—David Bothwell and James Rogers Land at Charleston, December 25, 1789—Bothwell Goes to Queenstown, Rogers to Fairfield—Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia Constituted—Members Present—Congregations Under Its Supervision—Their Names—Dr. Clark Clothes Himself in Canonical Robes—Number of Communicants—Burghers and Anti-Burghers Coalesce—Covenanters Stand Aloof—Character of the Congregations—Dr. Clark Dies—Rogers Ordained and Installed—Blackstock Arrives—Boyse Dies—McMullan Settles at Due West, Blackstock at



Neely's Creek—John Hemphill Settles at Hopewell, and McKnight at Coddle Creek—Dixon Settles at King's Mountain, Turkey Creek and Bullock's Creek—Alexander Porter Settles in Dr. Clark's Old Charge—Charges Brought Against Mr. McMullan—McMullan Suspended—Division of the Presbytery—Broad River the Dividing Line—James McGill Licensed—David Bothwell Dies, 1801—Mr. McMullan Restored at Sharon—Nature of Mr. McMullan's Difficulty—Messrs. McMullan and Dixon Decline the Authority of the Associate Reformed Church—Apply to the Associate Church—Organized into a Presbytery, 1803—Members of the Presbytery—The McMullan-Dixon Controversy.—**p. 282 to p. 294.**

## CHAPTER XX.

Organization of the Synod of the Carolinas—Members Present—Changes Which Had Taken Place Since the Organization of the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia—Character of Those Who Organized the Synod of the Carolinas—Their Pastoral Charges—Their Love for Each Other—The McMullan-Dixon Difficulty—Course Pursued by the Synod—Charges Brought Against the Associate Reformed Church by McMullan and Dixon—McMullan and Dixon Deposed—Division in the Associate Reformed Church—The Difference Between the Associate Reformed and the Associates—The Result of their Quarreling—The Presbytery of Chartiers—Resolutions of the Associate Synod Concerning Slavery—Rev. Thomas Ketchin and Several Congregations Join the Associate Reformed Church—Remaining History of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas—All the Associates in the South Coalesced with the Associate Reformed Church in 1844—Ministers of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas.—**p. 295 to p. 305.**

## CHAPTER XXI.

Slow Growth of the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas—Causes Emigration and Withdrawals in Order to Join the Associates—Number of Communicants in 1803—Associate Congregations all in First Presbytery—Strength of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas—Its Rapid Growth at First—Anti-Burghers All Join It—Growth of the Associate Reformed Church—Number of Presbyteries in 1804—General Synod Organized—Its Defects—Want of Harmony Among the Members—Synods of Scioto and the Carolinas Become Dissatisfied—Lexington Academy—Memorial in its Behalf—Memorial Shows a Want of Confidence in the Theological Seminary—Some Envious—John Mason's Letters—His Talents—The Mason-Matthews and Clark Difficulty—Settled to the Satisfaction of No One—Synod of Scioto Withdraws and the Synod of the Carolinas Requests to be Allowed to Become Independent—The Request Granted—Synod of the South Organized—Its Platform the Constitution as Adopted in 1799—Members Constituting the Synod of the South—No Deaths in Nineteen Years.—**p. 306 to p. 314.**

## CHAPTER XXII.

Object the Synod of the Carolinas had in View in Withdrawing from the General Synod—Did not Design Organizing a New Denomination—Their Constitution and Standards—The Basis of the Union which Formed the Associate Reformed Church—Westminster Confession of Faith—Its History—Westminster Assembly—By Whom Called, and for What—Time and Place for Meeting—Standards of the Associate Reformed Church—Westminster Confession of Faith Adopted by the Associate Reformed Church—Certain Sections Changed—These all Refer to the Power of the Civil Magistrate—The Sections Quoted—Standards of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South—Mistaken Notions about the Withdrawal of the Synod of the Carolinas—Slavery had Nothing to Do with the Withdrawal—Position of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South with Reference to Slavery in 1822—Real Cause of Separation—Believed that a Portion of the General Synod had Abandoned the Standards of the Associate Reformed Church—Subjects of Controversy—Communion and Psalmody—The Standards Quoted—The Word "Communion," as Used in the Standards—XXVth and XXVth Chapters of the Confession—Little Constitution—The Overture Quoted—Act to Amend the Constitution Quoted—Mason's Plea Published—The Grounds Taken in It—Psalmody—Standards on Psalmody Quoted.—**p. 315 to p. 343.**



## CHAPTER XXIII.

General Synod Dissolved Soon After the Organization of the Synod of the South—Synods of New York, Scioto and of the South Remain—Their Right to the Theological Library Asserted—Character of the Union Formed by the General Synod with the General Assembly—Gloomy Period in the History of the Associate Reformed Church—Death of Irwin, Rogers, McKnight, Blackstock and Hemphill—Death of two Theological Students, McJimsey and Boyce—Dr. J. T. Pressley Called to Pittsburgh—Samuel P. Pressley went to Athens—Missionary Labors of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South—Dr. Cooper of South Carolina College—Action of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South Concerning Him—His Charges Against Clergymen—Dr. Cooper's Influence—The Part the Associate Reformed Synod took in his Removal.—**p. 344 to p. 351.**

## CHAPTER XXIV.

The Want of a College Retarded the Growth of the Synod of the South—Students went North to be Educated—Classical Schools Established in the Synod—Theological Professors Appointed—Attempt to Reorganize the General Synod—Letter Sent to the Synods of New York and Scioto—Delegates Meet at Pittsburgh, on the 12th of September, 1827—Basis of Union Adopted and Sent to the Presbyteries—Disapproved and no Union Formed—Union of the Synods of New York and of the West in 1856—The Subject of Slavery Introduced into the Associate Reformed Synod of the West by Emigrants from the South—Overture from Hopewell, Ohio—Curious Facts in Respect to this Overture—Anti-Slavery Sentiments of Southern Origin—The First Presbytery of Ohio—Its Pastors Born in the South—The Synod of the South Memorialize the Legislature of South Carolina—The People of the United States Become Wildly Fanatical on Slavery, Pro and Con—Synod of the South Never Ultra on Slavery.—**p. 352 to p. 362.**

## CHAPTER XXV.

The Prospects Brighten About 1834—Nullification and Protective Tariff Disturbance—South Carolina Fearfully Disturbed—Immorality and Vice Increase—Mr. Clay's "Compromise" of 1833—Peace and Quiet Restored—Number of Ministers in the Synod in 1834—Their Names—All Dead but Dr. Boyce—Change in Feeling on Account of Slavery—Slavery Dragged into Everything—To be Ultra was an Evidence of Loyalty—Friendly Intercourse Between the North and South Cease—Resolution of the Synod of the South in 1834—Its Object—Resolution of 1835—Rev. Samuel W. McCracken Professor of Divinity for the Synod of the South—Politicians Prejudiced Against the Associate Reformed Synod of the South—Ultra Notions of Some—Attempt to Found a Manual Labor School—Failed—Agents Appointed to Collect Money, to be Called an Educational Fund—Resolutions Respecting the Establishing of a Seminary at Due West—Report of the Agents—Seminary Opened February, 1836—Called Clark and Erskine Seminary—Theological Seminary—Professor Elected—Rev. E. E. Pressley Elected in 1837—Erskine College Founded.—**p. 363 to p. 372.**

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Effect of Erskine College on the Synod of the South—A Great Undertaking Nobly Executed—Other Schools Spring up and Become Supporters of the College—Christian Magazine of the South Established—First Number Published January, 1843—Continued to Flourish for Nine Years—Erskine Miscellany Begun—Strength of the Synod in 1842—Dr. Isaac Grier Died 1843—His Connection with the Synod—Missions Begun—Associate Church a Missionary Church—Labors of the Early Fathers—Of Those who Succeeded Them—Missionary Labors of the Fathers Confined to the Home Field—The Extent of this Field—Resolution of 1817—Missionaries Sent West—Length of their Journeys—Funds Raised—Missionaries Sent West Annually—Localities Visited—Young Men First Sent on a Tour West—Churches in the West Founded—Missions Still Continued—Foreign



Missions—Resolution of 1837—Synod Assists the Synod of the North and the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in Foreign Missions—Board of Foreign Missions—Rev. T. Turner's Resolution of 1843—African Mission Set on Foot—Failed Through Mismanagement.—**p. 373 to p. 384.**

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

For Thirty Years only Two Presbyteries—Their Boundaries—Organization of the Tennessee Presbytery—Of the Alabama, Kentucky and Georgia Presbyteries—Of the Memphis Presbytery—Of Virginia Presbytery—Of Arkansas Presbytery—Of the Ohio Presbytery—Of the Texas Presbytery—Proposed Union with the Presbyterian Church—Their Difference.—**p. 385 to p. 389.**

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

The War—Its Causes—Results—State of the Country—Institutions of the Associate Reformed Church—Erskine College—Foreign Missions—Theological Seminary—Christian Magazine of the South—Erskine Miscellany—Due West Telescope—Associate Reformed Presbyterian—Due West Female College.—**p. 390 to p. 405.**

#### CHAPTER XXIX.

Concluding Chapter—Faith and Practice of the Associate Reformed Church—Denominational Standards—The Multitude Always Wrong—The Constitution of the Church is the Bible—Men do not Agree in its Interpretation—Creeds Necessary in Order that there may be Harmony—Divisions in the Church to be Deplored—Christian Denominations Duty Bound to Publish their Creeds—Power of Ecclesiastical Courts—Administrative not Legislative Bodies—Dr. Samuel Miller Quoted—Creed of the Associate Reformed Church—Of the Synod of the South—Judicial Acts Passed by the Old Associate Reformed Synod—These Acts Never Repealed—Still in Force in the Associate Reformed Synod of the South—These Acts Endorsed by the Associate Reformed Synod of the South in 1848—Tract of 1871 Quoted—Psalmody and Communion the Distinctive Features of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South.—**p. 406 to p. 418.**





# ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

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## CHAPTER I.

DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH—The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church—History of the Associate Presbytery—Its Adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith—Origin not a Difficulty About Communion or Psalmody—The Relief Church—Church of Scotland Previous to 1733—Recissory Act—Presbyterian Ministers Ejected—Presbyterians Forbidden to Preach—James II. Abdicated the Throne—"Killing Time"—William of Orange—General Assembly Meets—Presbyterianism Restored—Its Character—Cameronians—Causes Which Led to the Organization of Associate Presbytery—Christianity Introduced into Scotland—Form of Church Government—Donald I. Baptized—Druids Succeeded by the Culdees—Paladius Sent to Scotland—Lollards of Kyle—Culdees Suppressed—The Reformation—First Confession of Faith—Revolutionary Settlement—Its Defects—The Society Folk—Cameron and Cargill—Declaration of the Cameronians—Results of Secession—The Second Cause of Secession—Church of Scotland Calvinistic—Doctrinal Notions of Those Who Composed It After the Revolutionary Settlement—Bishop Burnet's Statement—Character of Presbyterian Ministers—The Auchterarder Proposition—Craig Refuses to Subscribe It—Professor Simson's Doctrines—General Assembly Favor Him—He is not Censured.

THE Church of God has, by the folly and wickedness of men, been divided into a multitude of fragments. However much this is to be deplored, it has been overruled by an All-wise God for good. In these divisions in Israel, the King and Head of the Church has displayed His power and manifested His wisdom. He has brought order out of confusion, light out of darkness, and so overruled evil as to make it rebound to His own glory and the good of His own dear people. Nothing more convincingly proves that the Church is not of man than the fact that it has withstood the shocks incident to these divisions. In spite of the persecutions of human governments and the folly of ecclesiastical courts, the Church of God still lives and grows and spreads.



The history of the Church is but the history of God's providential and gracious dealings with His peculiar people. To understand this history so as to make a practical application of it in our lives, we must have at least a correct outline of the history of the various branches of the Christian church. As he who would make himself thoroughly acquainted with the history of the ancient Jews must first study the history of each of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, so he who would understand the history of the Church must make himself acquainted with the fragments, into which, unfortunately, the Church is divided.

One of the fragmentary parts into which the church militant is divided, bears the name ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN. It is our purpose, in the following pages, to trace the origin and progress of this Christian denomination, from its organization down to the present time.

The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church is the result of an union formally consummated between the Associate Presbyterians and the Reformed Presbyterians of America, in Philadelphia, Pa., on the 1st of November, 1782. The body formed by this union retained the distinctive names of the denominations composing it. Hence the name Associate Reformed Presbyterian.

In order that we may have a correct knowledge of the Associate Reformed Church, it will be necessary that we trace the origin of both the Associate and the Reformed Presbyterian Churches. As there can be no difference between equals, and should be no jealousy among brothers, we propose to treat of the Associate first.



## History of the Associate Presbytery.

IT is now near one hundred and fifty years since Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff and James Fisher met at Gairney Bridge, near Kinross, in Scotland, and formed themselves into an ecclesiastical body, which they called the *Associate Presbytery*. These four venerable divines seceded from the Established Church of Scotland. Hence they, and all of those who, from that time to the present, have followed them, have been called "Seceders." The name is scarcely applicable to the members of the Associate Reformed Church. Still it is no disgrace to be called a *Seceder*. On the contrary, it is honorable. No event, if we except the Reformation from Popery, has been productive of greater good, both to the Church and the State, than the secession. Many persons in connection with the Associate Reformed Church, and nearly all the ministers and members of other denominations, think that the Secession Church had its origin in a controversy about close communion and Rouse's version of David's psalms. The general opinion in this country, outside of the Associate Reformed Church, is that at the time the secession took place, all Scotland, except the secession party, were in favor of practicing Catholic communion and singing Watts' psalms and hymns. Ebenezer Erskine and his coadjutors, they think, opposed these things and in a pet left the church of their fathers. Whether the introduction of Watts' psalms, instead of Rouse's version, would have been just ground for a secession from the Church of Scotland, or not, we shall not undertake to decide. One thing, however, is absolutely certain, psalmody and close communion had not one thing to do with bringing into existence the *Secession* Church. Not one word, by either party, was said about either Rouse's version of the psalms or Watts' version. More



than this: Watts' version of the psalms had scarcely at that time, been heard of in Scotland. Neither party used it. More than this: the Church of Scotland never did, only in isolated cases, use Watts' version of the psalms. Dr. Watts died in 1748, soon after the secession took place. He was an Englishman, and however well the original Seceders might have been pleased with his version of the psalms, there was something in the creed of Dr. Watts which would have caused the original Seceders to have stood aloof from him. Of this, however, we will speak in its proper place. The original Seceders, possibly, would not have made any serious objection to the version of the psalms prepared by Dr. Watts, from the fact that the psalmody question had never, at that time, been agitated. Rouse's version was gotten up, or rather adopted, by the authority or instruction of the Westminster Assembly; but it was never used by any denomination of Christians. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, in the month of August, 1647, ratified the Westminster Confession of Faith, and revised Rouse's version of the psalms. This revision, not Rouse's version, was adopted and has been in use, to the almost absolute exclusion of all others, from that time to the present, in the Church of Scotland. For more than two hundred years it has been sung by all the Presbyterians, of every name, in every nook and corner of that land. Neither psalmody nor close communion, it is certain, had one single thing to do in originating the Associate Presbytery.

From this Associate Presbytery sprung, in part, in the course of time, the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the United Presbyterian Church of North America, and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of the South. In all of these three denominations, one of the factors which entered to compose the denomination, was Associate. The Associate Church and the Relief Church united in 1847, and formed the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. In 1782 the Associate Church, or that part of it in America and the Covenanters of America, or the most of them, united and formed the Associate Reformed Church of North America. In 1858 that portion of the Associate Church which had not gone into the union of 1782, which formed the Associate Reformed Church,



united with the Associate Reformed Church in the north and northwestern portions of the United States of America, and formed the United Presbyterian Church of America. With the exception of the Covenanters, all these sprung from the secession which took place on the 6th of December, 1733, at Gairney Bridge, near Kinross, in Scotland. The leader in that bold but noble secession, was that venerable servant of God, Ebenezer Erskine. His worthy coadjutors were William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff and James Fisher. The original Seceders adopted, without alteration, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter; and those branches of the church which sprung from the church they formed, have all followed their example. The Covenanters did not go into the Church of Scotland on the re-establishing of that church after the *revolutionary settlement*. These faithful witnesses for the crown rights of the Lamb of God did not enter the Church of Scotland, for the same reasons, as we shall see, that Ebenezer Erskine and his three ministerial brethren were forced to come out of it.

The Relief Church was organized in 1761. The leaders in this secession were Revs. Thomas Gillespie, Thomas Boston (son of Thomas Boston, the author of *Man's Fourfold State*) and Thomas Collier. The two first were the principal actors. The causes which led to the secession of 1761, and those which led to the secession of 1733, were, in the main, identical. The wonder is, that they did not all unite and form one church—one denomination. The Covenanters expected this. They were the more anxious for a union, from the fact that at the time of the first secession, they had but one minister, Rev. John McMillan, and at the time of the second, the number had increased but little. A union was not formed; and although we may not be able to see it, good, no doubt, has been accomplished by their keeping aloof from each other.

It requires a somewhat extensive and accurate knowledge of the times, both during and preceding the secession of 1733, to be able to fully understand the actions of the Seceders. Whilst they have been called Seceders, and still the name is given to their followers, they never claimed to be revolutionists. They never asked that any portion of the Westminster Con-



fession of Faith and Catechism, which the Church of Scotland had adopted should be changed or amended in any particular whatever. They claimed that they did not secede from the Church of Scotland, but from the corrupt party in that church. If the Church of Scotland was corrupt, and these men could not, by remaining in that church, purge it of those corruptions, then they were justifiable in coming out of it. No right-minded individual will doubt this.

Let us now take a brief review of the Church of Scotland previous to the secession of 1733. In 1661, Charles II. established prelacy in Scotland. The "Act Recissory" was passed, by which Presbyterianism was banished from Scotland, as far as it could be by the arm of the law, and prelacy established. Presbyterian ministers were ejected from their pastoral charges, and prelatic preachers placed over the congregations, thus made vacant, by violence. All the acts of the Scotch Parliament, from 1638, with reference to the reformation of the Church, were annulled. It was made high treason to renew the Solemn League and Covenant. This struck a deadly blow at Presbyterianism in Scotland. Four hundred Presbyterian ministers were forbidden to preach the gospel unless they would first "affirm, testify and declare by their solemn oath that they acknowledged King Charles II. only supreme governor of Scotland, over all persons and in all causes." A very considerable number of professed Presbyterian ministers took this oath, rather than be deprived of their livings. The ejected ministers, although deprived of the use of the churches in which to worship God, began to hold meetings in the open fields. In order to put a stop to field preaching, in 1670 this enactment was made: "That if any man shall preach or pray in the fields, or in any house where there shall be more hearers than the house contains, so as some of them be without doors, he shall be punished with death and confiscation of goods." After this enactment, it was no uncommon thing for vile wretches to post themselves near the houses of pious families during the hour of family worship. The fact that they had heard the head of the family praying was reported to some government officer, and the man who had no other crime than that some one concealed near his house had heard him praying, was put to death



and his property confiscated, and his dependent family reduced to beggary. The result of this cruel law was to banish, for a time, family worship out of the land. It was all that a man's life was worth to be heard praying in his own house. These things continued during the reign of Charles II., and until his brother and successor, James II., abdicated the throne of England. This period has, with great propriety, been called the "killing time." Charles II., it was truthfully said, "was everything by starts, and nothing long." At one time he was a Protestant; at another time a Catholic; sometimes a Presbyterian, and again a persecuting Prelatist; in reality, a vile deceiver, a drunkard, a debauchee and bloodthirsty monster. James II. was a bigoted Catholic, and designed nothing less than subjecting the British dominions to the Pope of Rome. Both Charles II. and James II. regarded the Presbyterians as the great obstacle in their way to the restoration of Popery. The spirit of the Puritans, they no doubt concluded was broken, and the Episcopalians, they thought, would readily adopt Popery. In this they made a miscalculation. Puritanism still lived, and the Episcopalians, though decidedly and bigotedly opposed to the Presbyterians and Puritans, were, nevertheless, Protestants. The Presbyterians were first appointed to destruction; but the fury of the monsters was at length directed against all Protestants. The heart sickens at the horrid cruelties which God's chosen ones were called to suffer during this "killing time." The reign of the wicked, however desolating, is not permitted to continue forever. The career of James II. was shortened, or not even the elect would have been saved. God overruled the bloody work of these monsters, Charles and James, for good, thus showing that he is able to make the wrath of the wicked to praise him. Multitudes of the Presbyterians were put to death in an endless variety of ways. Some fled from their native land and took refuge wherever they could find it, whilst not a few were sold as slaves and brought to the plantations in America. Charles II. attempted to banish Presbyterianism from Scotland by establishing Prelacy. His secret object, however, was to reinstate Popery by first introducing Episcopacy. He was as wise as a serpent and as venomous as an adder. James II., his successor, attempted to do directly



and boldly what his wily brother had undertaken by a circuitous process. Both failed, and the Stuarts were thwarted in their nefarious plans and driven in disgrace from the throne of England. It makes the blood of a Protestant, and especially of a Presbyterian, boil to think of what his covenanted fathers were made to suffer by these fiends and their vile minions. No man but a tyrant, or a crouching slave, will ever dare vindicate the character of Charles II. or his impious coadjutors.

James II. was succeeded by William III., commonly called the Prince of Orange. William had married Mary, the daughter of James II. When James II. abdicated the throne of England, it was agreed that William and Mary should nominally reign conjointly. In reality, William was to be the sovereign. In English history, this period is known as the Revolutionary Settlement, or the Revolution of 1688. All we need state respecting this Revolution is that Presbyterianism, the ancient and, by a majority of the inhabitants, cherished form of church government, was restored to Scotland. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which had not met for more than thirty years, now convened, and Presbyterianism was restored. We must not, however, conclude that it was Presbyterianism such as exists at the present day, or even such as had once existed in Scotland. The truth is, as we hope to be able to show, from the time the church established by the Apostles was corrupted, there never existed any Bible Presbyterian Church until the time of the secession. The Covenanters and Secession fathers were a long way in advance of their age. This was not any sin, or even fault, on their part; but in a worldly point of view, it was a misfortune.

The reorganization or reestablishing of Presbyterianism in Scotland, after the Revolutionary Settlement was anomalous and every way very defective. The doors of the church were opened wide for any who desired to enter it. In fact, it was not claimed that the Bible form of church government is Presbyterianism. All that was claimed, was that Presbyterianism was the form of church government at that time established in Scotland. This opened the door for Prelatists to enter the church, and many Prelatists did enter it.



To any reflecting mind it will readily appear that that denomination of Christians which does not claim for its form of church government anything higher than that it is established by the law of the land, is destitute of a firm base upon which to build. Such a denomination must change as the State changes. Such was the Church of Scotland as reorganized after the overthrow of James II. As might have been expected, there was little unanimity of sentiment and less concert of action. Within its pale there were Presbyterians and Prelatists, Calvinists, Pelagians, Socinians, Arminians and Arians. This heterogeneous mass soon began to show signs of putrefaction. We cannot too much admire the often-abused, and to this day vilely slandered Cameronians for not going into this church. The wonder is not that the secession took place in 1733, but that it did not take place sooner, and that when it did occur, that the number was only four. Had the Presbyterian system of church government been understood then as it is understood by some at the present day, the honor of the secession of 1733 would have been shared by a far greater number of persons. Oppression and cruelty, however, had made the multitude timid, and the general corruption of the period had produced carelessness in the minds of nearly all.

The causes which led to the organization of the Associate Presbytery, or to the founding of the Secession Church, may be summed up under three heads: 1st. A mongrel Presbyterian form of church government. 2nd. Heterodox doctrines, or doctrines manifestly in conflict with those laid down in the Westminster Confession of Faith. 3rd. The unrighteous and consequently oppressive law of patronage.

The form of church government which was, at an early period, adopted by the Scotch, was clearly Presbyterian. Ancient historians tell us that it was during the Second Persecution. In A. D. 95 Domitian assumed, for the seventeenth time, the consulship of Rome. That same year he began, on account of his rapacity, to persecute the Jews. The Romans had not, at that time, learned to distinguish between Jews and Christians, and consequently Jews and Christians were equally subjected to horrid cruelties. Many of these despised people fled from the country, that they might escape the monster. Of



those who remained some were put to death, while others were banished to dreary abodes. John was banished to Patmos, where Jesus Christ was pleased to reveal to him "things which must shortly come to pass." At the same time, some individuals, whose names have not been recorded, fled to Scotland, and in that

"Land of the brown heath and shaggy wood,  
Land of the mountain and the flood,"

propagated the gospel of Jesus Christ. Whoever these refugees were, they had learned the principles of the Christian religion from the apostles and early disciples of our Lord. It is possible that some of them had seen the Lord himself and learned lessons of wisdom from him who "spoke as never man spake." The influence of these Christians was very great. Paganism gradually gave way, and about the year A. D. 203, Donald I., together with his household and many of the nobles, made a public profession of Christianity and were baptized in the name of the Trinity.

In the year A. D. 277, during the reign of King Crathilinth, Christianity greatly flourished. At this time a number of ministers of the gospel and private Christians, banished by Aurelius and Dioclesian, fled to Scotland. The Druids and their idolatrous worship melted away before the sun of righteousness. The idolatrous Druids were succeeded by the pious Culdees. Manifestly, the form of church government first established in Scotland was Presbyterianism. It was the same as that established by the Apostles of our Lord. Each pastor was a bishop. In other words, there were as many bishops as there were pastoral charges, and the number of ruling elders in each congregation was about eight. This form of church government continued in Scotland until the arrival of Paladius, in the year A. D. 452. Paladius was sent to Scotland by Pope Celestine. Simple Presbyterianism began gradually to be exchanged for Popery, which continued until the appearance of the Lollards, of Kyle, in 1494.

The conflict between truth and falsehood now began. The struggle was long and sore. Many eminent servants of the Lord perished in the effort to redeem Scotland from the thralldom of Popery. The Culdees were suppressed in the year



1297, and darkness and gloom hung over the land. All was night, except a few stars which refused to be obscured by the lowering clouds of ignorance and superstition.

Error may flourish for a short time ; but it must die. Truth cannot die. The Reformation began in 1494 with the Lollards, of Kyle, and was accomplished in 1560, mainly through the instrumentality of John Knox. In 1560, the First Confession of Faith was adopted. From the first introduction of the gospel into Scotland, up to the time of the Revolutionary Settlement, the mass of the best people in Scotland were Presbyterians. They believed that Presbyterianism is the Bible form of church government. When the Presbyterian Church was reorganized, during the reign of William the Prince of Orange, it was not claimed that the Bible contains any form of church government. Those who entered the Presbyterian Church of Scotland at that time did not subscribe to its Confession of Faith as sanctioned by the Word of God. The strictly Presbyterian ministers had all been ejected during the reign of the two previous kings. At the time of the Revolutionary Settlement, only about sixty of these remained alive. No small number of the ejected ministers had traitorously deserted Presbyterianism and gone over to Prelacy. These were taken into the Presbyterian church on its reorganization. This is not all. The Episcopal ministers who were settled in Scotland, also were taken into the new organization.

The majority of the Scotch people were Presbyterian in their sentiments, but the ministers were divided in their opinions respecting church government. There were the sixty old ejected ministers who had never deserted the Presbyterian banner during the past persecutions, and there were those who cared nothing whatever about the form of church government. Some of the latter class had once been Presbyterians, but that they might enjoy the revenues of the church, they joined the Episcopal Church when that was in power, and now they went into the Presbyterian Church for the same reasons. The third class consisted of those ministers who preferred Prelacy to Presbyterianism, but who went into the Presbyterian Church for the same reasons that some of the Presbyterian ministers had formerly gone into the Episcopal Church. That every



one might feel easy in the new church, the terms of admission were made as easy as possible. The boast was made that no one, no matter what were his notions respecting church government, was disturbed in this newly-organized church.

It makes no sort of difference what may be our individual notions respecting church government, we are warranted in saying that this was a strange mixing up of things. The results would have been identical had the effort been to establish a nominal Prelatic church in Scotland. Nothing more was aimed at than simply to organize a nominal Presbyterian Church, and nothing more was effected. So far as the laity was concerned, the majority of the Scotch was in favor of the Presbyterian form of church government, but the clergy was divided. The few were strict Presbyterians; the multitude either Prelatists or criminally indifferent on the subject of church government. The rigid Presbyterians were charged with being unreasonable. The prevailing sentiment was, that no one should be disturbed, in any way, about his notions concerning church government. Peace, on this subject, was everything; truth nothing. Any one can see that such a church organization was poorly fitted to beget confidence in the wise and prudent. Men are so constituted that they will live more harmoniously together under a bad form of government, when that form of government is heartily approved and sincerely adopted, than under a good form of government when it is adopted as a mere matter of policy. The simple truth is, that the Scotch Church, at the time of the Revolutionary Settlement, acted, to a culpable extent, the part of a wheedling politician. The Presbyterian portion admitted, as a mere matter of policy, the Prelatist to full membership, and for a similar reason, the Prelatists entered the Presbyterian Church.

What could be more inconsistent than for the bishops and other clergy of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, as established by Charles II. to meet in presbyteries, synods and general assemblies with those Presbyterians whom they had, in some sense, formerly driven from their pastoral charges? These men had been bitterly opposed to each other. The change of English sovereigns could not change their individual opinions.



Each party hoped that by being politic in its movements, it might get some advantage over the other. The object was to steal a march and obtain a more favorable time and place for the decisive conflict.

The struggle came ; but not at the time, nor in the way that was expected. It came of necessity. Parties diametrically opposed to each other had formed a nominal coalescence ; individuals entertaining dissimilar opinions concerning church government, had, for purposes of policy, placed themselves on the same platform and under the same banner. Their differences were not concerning those things about which men may disagree and still be united ; but their quarrels were about the fundamental principles of the Christian religion.

It must not be forgotten that there always was in Scotland a respectable number of individuals who did not go into this newly-organized Presbyterian Church. These were the "Society Folk," or Covenanters. The misfortune of these people was, that they were fully a century ahead of the men of their age. Like John the Baptist, they were the forerunners of a better day ; and like John the Baptist, many of them were beheaded. Richard Cameron and Donald Cargill were the only ministers whom these pious people would acknowledge ; and both of them were called upon, in the providence of God, to die for the cause which they had espoused. Cameron fell at Airdsmoss. His head and hands were cut off and taken to Edinburgh. There they were exposed in a conspicuous place, to be gazed upon alike by friends and foes. He to whom was assigned this last office, said, while engaged in the work : "These are the head and hands of the man who lived preaching and praying, and died fighting and praying." This was literally true ; for previous to going into the conflict, he tenderly prayed : "Lord, spare the green and take the ripe." Cargill was spared, but only that he might be murdered because he had dared to excommunicate from the privileges of the church Charles II. and several other individuals, who had been proved guilty of drunkenness, hypocrisy, perjury, murder and adultery. These bold, and perhaps, we may say, to some extent, imprudent men, were permitted to give utterance to sentiments which are worthy of free men. "We," say they, "declare



that we shall set up over ourselves, and over what God shall give us power of, government and governors according to the word of God." They farther declare that they shall no more commit the government of themselves and the making of laws for them to a single person. Right or wrong, they were the bold advocates of a Presbyterian form of church government, and fearlessly proclaimed to the world a system of civil government, which the rest of mankind were not, at that time, prepared to adopt. In the declarations of these despised Covenanters, we easily discover the germ of the American Constitution.

From the Church of Scotland, re-organized as we have stated above, the founders of the Associate Presbytery seceded. One cause of the secession was, that the Church of Scotland claimed to be Presbyterian, whilst in reality, it was only partly so. The result of the secession was that a complete change has been effected in the Presbyterian Church in every portion of the world. It is an admitted fact that those Presbyterian Churches, which, in their mode of worship and formulas of doctrine most closely approach the Associate Fathers and Covenanters, present the truest type of Presbyterianism. Right or wrong, we need not stop to enquire, the Seceders have revolutionized and purified the Presbyterian Church, and the Seceders, Covenanters and Puritans have revolutionized the civil governments of the world.

The second cause of the secession was unscriptural doctrines, mainly respecting the divinity of our Saviour and the nature and extent of the atonement.

When the Church of Scotland was reorganized after the Revolutionary Settlement, it was no more a unit on the cardinal doctrines of the Cross than it was with respect to church government.

Strictly speaking, it is not the province of the historian to decide respecting systems of doctrine, as to which is orthodox and which is heterodox. The business of the historian is simply and truthfully to state facts and their results.

Such being the case, we may state that from its beginning, the Church of Scotland has ever claimed to be Calvinistic in its creed. Such it claimed to be when reorganized in 1688.



The Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechism, Larger and Shorter, which are plainly Calvinistic, were adopted as expressive of the faith and practice of the church.

Still, it is no uncommon thing for a church to have a good creed and a wretchedly bad practice. Without much effort numerous instances might be cited to prove that the confessions of faith of churches and the actual belief and the practices of those churches are palpably antagonistic. Like the witnesses against our Saviour, they agree not with one another. In theory, the Church of Scotland, in 1688, adopted a Calvinistic creed, but in reality it was a mass of repugnant isms.

This was the case with respect to the ministers, and partially true of the people. In a doctrinal point of view, the ministers of this newly-organized Presbyterian Church were greatly divided. Those of the old ejected ministers who still were alive, were generally strict Calvinists; the others were Arminians, Socinians and Arians in doctrine, and Erastians in church government. On the great cardinal doctrines of the Cross, they differed with each other. These all went into the Presbyterian Church, whilst only a small part of them were in reality Calvinistic Presbyterians in sentiment.

It matters not which one of the various parties forming the Church of Scotland, at the period of which we are treating, could lay the highest claim to a Scriptural orthodoxy, or whether any of them was orthodox. All that is incumbent upon us at present is to show that parties differing with each other on the fundamentals of the Christian religion, did unite and form, what the majority of them, from mercenary motives, were content should be called a Presbyterian Church. That such an union was formed must be manifest to any one who will reflect upon the fact that the bishops and other prelatial clergymen, who had been settled in Scotland during the reign of the two former kings, as well as the Presbyterian ministers, were actively concerned in the reorganization of the Church of Scotland. No concessions were made by either party. The Episcopal bishops and clergymen were, after they entered the National Presbyterian Church, whatever they were before they entered it. The principal section in the articles of that amalgamation which took place in the



reorganizing of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland after the restoration, was that the parties should not disturb each other respecting their religious beliefs. This section, it is true, was not written; but it was, with a few exceptions, adopted by the ministers and rigidly practiced by nearly all.

It seems strange that the bishops, who, in a particular sense had been actively connected with the recent persecutions, could dare to face those whom they had been instrumental in subjecting to so much deprivation and suffering. On the other hand it is marvelous that the Presbyterian ministers permitted the prelatie party to enter the Presbyterian Church without first demanding of them an humble confession of past offences and a promise that in future they would be faithful. Our wonder ceases when we reflect that the prospects of peace incited forgetfulness in the minds of the Presbyterian ministers, and the uncertainty in their minds whether that anxiously looked for peace would be permanent, made them cautious even to timidity. They trembled, lest by a misguided and ill-timed blow, they might resuscitate the prostrate monster. With the prelatie clergymen it was different. They were reduced to that state that they had to choose either to enter the Presbyterian Church or deprive themselves of all pecuniary support by the National Church. As the consciences of many of them were not very tender, they were not slow in making a choice. A few years before, it may be added, a number of Presbyterian ministers had, for the sake of a comfortable living, gone into the Episcopal Church for the same reason that the Episcopal clergymen now went into the Presbyterian Church.

On the principle that what a man sows that shall he also reap, we might expect to find a church composed of such discordant elements producing very dissimilar fruit. Such was, in reality, the case. In Scotland there were, at that time, eight hundred and ninety parishes. Of these, four hundred were supplied by curates belonging to the Episcopal Church. The greater number of the remaining parishes were vacant, and those not vacant were occupied by apostate Presbyterian clergymen. By apostate Presbyterian clergymen we mean Presbyterian ministers,



who during the persecutions in the time of Charles II. and James II., complied with the demands of the sovereigns, that they might enjoy the loaves and the fishes of the government.

So far as church government and notions concerning the fundamental doctrines of the Bible are concerned, there was no harmony among the leading men who composed the Church of Scotland at the time of its reorganization after the Revolution of 1688. It was not long until the fruits of this union became manifest. Bishop Burnet, in speaking of the Episcopal incumbents, uses the following language: "They were the worst preachers I ever heard; they were ignorant to a reproach, and many of them were clearly vicious. They were a disgrace to their orders, and were, indeed, the dregs and refuse of the northern parts. Those of them that rose above contempt and scandal were men of such violent tempers that they were as much hated as the others were despised." The same might be said concerning, perhaps, a majority of the Presbyterian clergymen. With the exception of the ejected preachers, most of whom were old and worn out with cares and troubles, and the few who inclined to the Cameronians, the other Presbyterian clergymen belonged to that class of men who are "carried about with every wind of doctrine." They were willing to profess one thing to-day and the very opposite thing to-morrow. For the sake of peace, they were willing to subscribe to any thing, and that they might enjoy the living granted by the church, they were prepared to change their creed as often as Laban changed Jacob's wages. Such men could be depended upon by no party. They were ever found in the ranks of that party which appeared to be most powerful and most popular. Like Charles II., they were "every thing by starts, and nothing long."

It is not true that a bad beginning makes a good ending. A bad beginning must terminate badly. Neither is it true that the motive, in every instance, gives character to the act. No doubt, the motive of Saul in offering up a burnt offering and peace offerings, was good. Certainly Saul though his motive was good; but God charged him with gross folly in that thing. He kept not the commandment of God, although he most certainly thought he acted from proper motives. Whatever may



have been the motives of those actively concerned in the reorganization of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, they certainly acted very foolishly, in that they formed a union out of material so palpably incongruous. The end was like the beginning. It was not long until it became a very common thing for the ministers to teach that sinners must prepare themselves before coming to Christ. One of the Presbyteries (Auchterarder) in order to check the progress of this unscriptural doctrine, required candidates for license to sign the following proposition: "I believe that it is not sound and orthodox to teach that we must forsake our sins in order to our coming to Christ and instating us in covenant with God." This proposition seems to be in perfect harmony with the whole scope of the Scriptures. Our Saviour says: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." If the sinner of himself can forsake his sins, it is very difficult to understand for what purpose he should go to Christ. The experience of all God's people is that it is only through the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit that sinners are enabled to break off their sins. Before the sinner can forsake his sins, he must be born again—born of the Holy Spirit. Hence, to talk about the sinner forsaking his sins before he comes to Christ, is manifestly the same thing as to say that the sinner must save himself before he comes to Christ to be saved.

There is no sort of doubt concerning the agreement of this proposition of the Auchterarder Presbytery and the Westminster Confession of Faith. Such being the case, it was but reasonable to suppose that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland would have given to the proposition its hearty approval. The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, had been adopted as the standards of that Church, and consequently, to have approved of the proposition, would have been only acting consistently. Such, however, was not the case.

The Presbytery of Auchterarder refused to license a Mr. Craig, because he would not subscribe to this proposition. Craig brought the matter before the General Assembly, and the result was that the Presbytery was ordered to give him his li-



cense. This was not all. The proposition was scoffingly called "the Auchterarder Creed," and the members of the Presbytery were charged not to use, in the future, any such expressions as those contained in this creed.

To the Assembly of 1717, the same which passed sentence upon the Auchterarder proposition, it was clearly proved that John Simson, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow, was accustomed to teach, in his lectures to the students, doctrines alike opposed to the word of God and the subordinate standards of the Church. That the reader may know exactly what these doctrines were, we give them in the language of Professor Simson himself:

"That by the light of nature, and the works of creation and Providence, God has given an obscure, objective revelation of the Gospel; and that it is probable none are excluded from the benefit of the remedy for sin provided by God and published twice to the whole world, except those who, by their actual sin, exclude themselves, and slight and reject the clear light of the Gospel revealed to the Church, or that obscurer discovery and offer of grace made to all without the Church; and that if the heathen would, in sincerity and truth, and in the diligent use of means that Providence lays to their hand, seek from God the knowledge of the way of reconciliation, necessary for their acceptable serving of Him, and being saved by Him, he would discover it to them."

In this language there is no small amount of that metaphysical obscurity which always characterized its wily author. His case had been on hand for three years, or since the Assembly of 1714, and he was careful to feel his way. He knew, as well as any man in the church, what were the doctrines of the Confession of Faith, and he knew that his teachings were subversive of the doctrines contained in that Confession of Faith.

From this language of Professor Simson, it is evident that he taught that there are two ways by which sinners may, if they will, obtain salvation. The one is by following the light of nature as revealed in the works of creation and Providence, and the other is by believing in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures. It is also evident that Professor Simson places the ground of the sinner's condemnation, in either refusing to follow the light of nature, or in rejecting the Saviour.



However plausible this may appear, it is not in harmony with the Westminster Confession of Faith which Professor Simson had adopted, and it is in plain conflict with the Word of God. To show that it is opposed to the subordinate standards of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, it will be sufficient to quote the answer to the sixtieth question in the Larger Catechism :

“ They who, having never heard the Gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the laws of that religion which they profess ; neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone.”

The Church of Scotland, of which John Simson was an honored member, had adopted this as expressive of its belief on the subject of which it treats. Nothing can be more glaring than the conflict which subsists between the doctrines taught by the Glasgow professor and the Larger Catechism. Professor Simson taught that men can be saved by sincerely and diligently seeking God according to the light of nature. In other words, he taught that God has appointed two ways by which sinners may be saved from their sins. This will appear to be a fair deduction from the following language used by the Professor in answer to the libel which was presented against him by Rev. James Webster, of Edinburgh: “ There are,” he says, “ Means appointed of God for obtaining saving grace, which means, when diligently used with seriousness, sincerely and faith of being heard, God has promised to bless with success; and the going about these means in the foresaid manner, is not above the reach of our natural ability and power.”

We admit that there are some metaphysical mazes concealed in the verbiage of the Professor; but if his language means anything, it means that there is a way of salvation with which Jesus Christ has nothing whatever to do, and that man in his natural state, and with no other help except his natural ability and power, can discover that way and be saved. We take it for granted that Professor Simson believed that sinners could be saved through Jesus Christ. If so, then it is fair to infer that he believed and taught that there are two ways by which men can be saved from their sins.



In addition to the above, Professor Simson declared, in his answer to Webster's libel, that :

"It is inconsistent with the justice of God to create a soul without any original righteousness or any disposition to good ; and that the souls of infants, since the fall, as they come from the hands of their Creator, are as pure and holy as the souls of infants would have been created, supposing man had not fallen ; and that they are created as pure and holy as Adam's was, except as to those qualifications and habits which he received, as being created in an adult state."

Here he again flies in the face of both the Confession of Faith and the Bible. The latter teaches that men, so far from having in infancy, pure and holy souls, were shapen in iniquity, and in sin did their mothers conceive them ; and the former teaches that all mankind sined in Adam and fell with him in his first transgression, and that original sin is conveyed from Adam to his posterity, by ordinary generation, so as all that proceed from him in that way, are conceived and born in sin.

The case of Professor Simson was brought to the notice of the Assembly of 1714, but was not terminated until 1717. It was evident, from the beginning, that the majority of the members of the Assembly were opposed to having anything to do with the case. It was proposed by Rev. James Webster, who called the attention of the Assembly of 1714 to the reports concerning the teaching of heterodox doctrines, by Professor Simson, that the matter be investigated by the Assembly. This course the Assembly positively refused to take ; but appointed, or rather permitted Mr. Webster and any others who might join him, to lay in their complaint against Professor Simson before the Presbytery of Glasgow. The Assembly refused to be responsible for any thing Mr. Webster and his adherents might do, but intimated very plainly that the Webster party would be regarded as libelers of Professor Simson. When, in 1717, the case had to be disposed of in some way, the Assembly neither deprived Professor Simson of his position, nor did they even censure him. They could not, without stultifying themselves, approve of his strange teaching ; hence, they simply say that he has been teaching some things not necessary to be taught in divinity, and that in the future he must abstain from given expression to these notions.



When we compare the decision of the same Assembly with regard to the Auchterarder proposition, and that of Professor Simson, we have too plain evidence that the Church of Scotland was heterodox in doctrine, if the Westminster Confession of Faith is orthodox. The Auchterarder proposition and the Confession of Faith agree; the doctrines of the Confession of Faith and those taught by Professor Simson disagree. Yet the former is, by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, censured; while the Assembly tacitly approves the latter. In censuring the Auchterarder Presbytery, it virtually condemned the doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith, while, by not censuring Professor Simson, and by not thrusting him out of office, it encouraged him to take a more decided stand against the truth.

It will be manifest to the reader that in doctrine the Church of Scotland was divided. Those who had accepted the Westminster Confession of Faith as a matter of policy, soon ceased to be prudent and politic, and began to teach doctrines which have ever been regarded by orthodox Presbyterians as unscriptural.



## CHAPTER II.

“Marrow” Controversy—The Author of “The Marrow of Modern Divinity”—Introduced into Scotland—Republished by Rev. James Hog—Excited great Opposition—Severely Criticised by Principal Haddow—Defended by Thomas Boston—Commission of the General Assembly—“The Marrow of Modern Divinity” Referred to the Commission—Action of the Commission—Summon before them Hog, Hamilton, Brisbane and Warden—Report of the Commission—“The Marrow of Modern Divinity” Condemned by the Assembly—The Effect upon the People—Attempt to again Bring the Matter before the Assembly—“Marrow” Men called “Representers”—Summoned before the Commission—Twelve Questions—Answers—Character of the Answers.

About the same time, or shortly after the difficulty about the Auchterarder proposition and the trial of Professor Simson occurred, another controversy sprung up in the Church of Scotland. This was called the “Marrow difficulty.” It was about a book called “The Marrow of Modern Divinity.”

As the controversy about this book was sharp, and had very much to do in bringing about the secession which formed the Associate Presbytery, it will be necessary to examine it carefully.

The book called the “Marrow of Modern Divinity” consists of two parts. The first part was published in England, in 1644; the second in 1648. The first part treats of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. The second part is an exposition of the Ten Commandments. Its author was Edward Fisher, of whom little more is known than his name. According to the most credible tradition, he at one time followed the humble occupation of a barber in London; but afterwards, in accordance with that marvelous Providence which raises the poor from the dust, he became minister to one of the Independent congregations. The book is little else than a compilation from the works of the most Evangelical Protestant divines. It was recommended by Caryl, Sprigge and many other distinguished non-conforming divines, and was so popular that it soon went through ten successive editions.



The book was introduced into Scotland in rather a remarkable way. One of the members of the Simprin congregation, of which Thomas Boston was pastor, had been a soldier during the civil war. One day, when Mr. Boston was visiting this man and his family, he discovered, above the window, two old books. He reached up and took the books down, and found that the title of one of the books was "Christ's Blood Flowing Freely for Sinners." The other book was the "Marrow of Modern Divinity." These books the parishioner of Mr. Boston had brought with him from England on his return from the war. With the "Marrow of Modern Divinity" Mr. Boston was highly pleased, and he recommended it to some of his ministerial brethren. So well pleased was Rev. James Hog, minister of Carnock, with the book, that in 1718 he republished the first part of it, prefixing a recommendatory preface. With regard to the "Marrow of Modern Divinity," it never was claimed that it was free from all defects. No doubt there are some things said in it that are not in strict accordance with the Scriptures. The same may be said of every human compend. But there are some things contained in it which are true, though they are not expressed in the most happy way. In a word, it is not an inspired work, nor was inspiration ever claimed for it by its most enthusiastic admirers. Its author was only a man, but clearly a man whose mind had been enlightened by the Spirit of God. The book was regarded at the time of its publication as orthodox, and to the present day all those Christian denominations who have adopted that system of doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, have adopted it as a standard theological work. It has been repeatedly published in Europe and America, and is to-day in the library of nearly every thoroughly Calvinistic divine in England, in Ireland, in Scotland and in America. This book, the general orthodoxy of which has never been doubted by the most devoutly pious people on earth, created the most intense excitement in the Church of Scotland. Had the work been thoroughly and avowedly infidel in all its teachings, and positively wicked in all its tendencies, it could not have excited more bitter opposition. It was assailed from the pulpit and



the press by those ministers who opposed the Auchterarder creed, as it was scoffingly called, and by the avowed or secret friends of Professor Simson's strange doctrines. In 1719 a complaint was formally made against the "Marrow of Modern Divinity." The charge was made that the book contained unscriptural and dangerous sentiments. At the opening of the Synod of Fife, in April, 1719, Principal Haddow, of St. Andrew's preached a sermon in which he severely criticised the book. This sermon, in order to give it more publicity, was, at the request of the latitudinarian party, issued from the press, and put into general circulation. The Boston and Hog party replied to this sermon, and soon the line of demarkation between the parties became distinct and well defined.

When the "Marrow of Modern Divinity" came up before the Assembly, it was not disposed of in a presbyterial way, but was referred to the commission.

That the reader may have a clear conception of what was meant by the commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, it will suffice to say that when each Assembly adjourned, it did not adjourn *sine die*, but converted itself into a committee of the whole. To its number was added any persons, who, from some informality in the papers had been rejected, and some other individuals named by the Moderator.

This commission, which, in reality, consisted of all the members of the Assembly and the additions mentioned, met in the Assembly House on the first day after the dissolution of the Assembly proper, and thereafter at the expiration of every three months, until the next regular meeting of the Assembly. They had the right, however, to meet when and where, and as frequently as they deemed expedient. They were a kind of high commission, possessing full power to decide finally in the causes which came before them.

The "Marrow of Modern Divinity" was referred to this high commission, to be dealt with as prejudice and ignorance might suggest. This is not too strong language; for it is very certain that a majority of the members of the commission had



never seen the book, and it is equally certain, from what followed, that they had already decided upon the nature and character of its contents.

The Assembly charged this court of inquiry to be very careful "that the purity of doctrine be preserved." It was further enjoined upon the commission "to call before them any authors or recommenders of books or pamphlets containing any doctrine not agreeable to the Confession of Faith.

All this appears very well; but the sequel will show that it was fair only in appearance. The commission appointed a committee to take the matter under consideration and report to the next General Assembly. "This committee divided themselves into two sections, the one to meet at St. Andrew's, and the other at Edinburgh." That portion of the committee which met at St. Andrew's made a number of extracts from the hated and prejudged publication, and sent them, together with various remarks, criticisms and condemnations, to the Edinburgh section of the committee. The Edinburgh division of the committee summoned before them James Hog, Alexander Hamilton, James Brisbane and John Warden. These men were distinguished alike for their piety, zeal and orthodoxy. Like vile culprits who had been leagued together in some act of outlawry, these good men were dragged before this wing of the committee, and each examined separately and alone.

When the Assembly of 1720 met, the committee presented a report containing a number of garbled extracts from the "Marrow of Modern Divinity." The object designed by these quotations was to show that the book was heterodox. The contents, or rather the supposed contents of the book, were discussed, and the following enactment adopted:

"All the ministers of the church are strictly prohibited and discharged, either by printing, writing or preaching, to recommend the *Marrow*, or in discourse to say anything in favor of it; but, on the contrary, they are enjoined and required to warn and exhort their people, in whose hands the said book is, or may come, not to read or use the same."

The passage of this act had an effect very different from what was intended. The book, heretofore little known, was now eagerly sought after and read by the masses of the people. It was expected that the book would be found full of startling



errors and fatal heresies. The people discovered, on the contrary, that the book was just what its name purported to be—the marrow of modern divinity. Thomas Boston, and other good and godly men, styled it “a bundle of sweet and pleasant gospel truths.” The condemnatory act of the Assembly served the purpose of advertising extensively the book which it was designed to consign to oblivion.

The people generally, and a few of the most pious ministers of the gospel in the Church of Scotland, were grieved by the course which the General Assembly had taken. They regarded the highest ecclesiastical court of the National Church as having aimed a deadly blow at the fundamental doctrines of free grace. Laboring under these convictions, it was thought advisable to have the subject brought again before the Assembly, and, if possible, secure the repeal of the unjust act. A meeting for consultation and advice was appointed at the house of William Wardlaw, in Edinburgh. The meeting was attended by Revs. James Kidd, Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, James Wardlaw, William Wilson, James Bathgate, Gabriel Wilson, Henry Davidson and Thomas Boston. These good men, whose names will go down to the latest generation of men, before taking up the business for which they had met, sought the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit.

Thomas Boston, whose piety has never been called in question, had drawn up a paper in which the evils complained of and the relief sought, were clearly stated. This paper, it was agreed, should be put into the hands of Ebenezer Erskine, and that he should draw up a paper to be presented to the next General Assembly. After several meetings, at which the paper prepared by Ebenezer Erskine was carefully and prayerfully considered, it was agreed to present it to the coming Assembly. This paper was signed by James Hog, Thomas Boston, John Bonar, John Williamson, James Kidd, Gabriel Wilson, Ebenezer Erskine, Ralph Erskine, James Wardlaw, Henry Davidson, James Bathgate and William Hunter.

In 1721, the paper prepared by these good men was put into the hands of the committee on bills. The Representatives, as the *Marrow* men were called, expected that it would be immediately brought before the Assembly and considered; but the



King's commissioner taking sick suddenly, the Assembly was dissolved. The paper prepared by the *Marrow* men was committed to the commission with instructions that every thing should be prepared for the next Assembly. They, however, were not granted power to finally decide this matter.

The commission summoned the Representatives before them frequently, and finally informed them that they would be required to answer twelve questions. The questions were delivered to the Representatives in writing, and although the course taken and the demand made was unusual and unreasonable, the Representatives thought it best to answer them. The answers were prepared by Ebenezer Erskine and William Wilson, and given to the commission.

ANSWERS FOR THE MINISTERS UNDER-SUBSCRIBING, TO QUERIES PUT TO THEM BY THE COMMISSION OF THE LATE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1721.

ADHERING to, and holding as here repeated, our subscribed answer given in to the Reverend Commission, when by them called to receive these queries,—we come to adventure, under the conduct of the faithful and true Witness, who has promised the Spirit of truth to lead his people into all truth, to make answer to the said queries. To the which before we proceed, we crave leave to represent, that the title, thereto prefixed, viz. “Queries to be put to Mr. James Hog, and other ministers, who gave in a representation in favour of the Marrow, to the General Assembly, 1721,” as well as that prefixed to the Commission’s overture anent this affair, hath a native tendency to divert and bemist the reader, to expose us, and to turn the matter off its proper hinge, by giving a wrong colour to our representation; as if the chief design of it was to plead, not for the precious truths of the gospel, which we conceived to be wounded by the condemnatory act, but for “The Marrow of Modern Divinity;” the which though we value for a good and useful book, and doubt not but the church of God may be much edified by it, as we ourselves have been; yet came it never into our minds to hold it or any other private writing faultless, nor to put it on a level with our approved standards of doctrine.

QUERY I. *Whether are there any precepts in the gospel, that were not actually given before the gospel was revealed?*

ANSWER. The passages in our representation, marked out to us for the grounds of this query, are these: “The gospel-doctrine, known only by a new revelation after the fall.\*—Of the same dismal tendency we apprehend to be the declaring of that distinction of the law, as it is the law of works, and as it is the law of Christ, as the author applies it, to be altogether groundless.†—The erroneous doctrine of justification, for something wrought in or done by the sinner, as his righteousness, or keeping the new and gospel-law.”‡ Now, leaving it to others to judge if these passages gave any just occasion to this question,—we answer,

\* Par. 2.

† Par. 5.

‡ Par penult.



1mo, In the gospel, taken strictly, and as contradistinct from the law, for a doctrine of grace, or good news from heaven, of help in God through Jesus Christ, to lost, self-destroying creatures of Adam's race, or the glad tidings of a Saviour, with life and salvation in him to the chief of sinners, there are no precepts; all these, the command to believe and repent not excepted, belonging to and flowing from the law, which fastens the new duty on us, the same moment the gospel reveals the new object.

That in the gospel, taken strictly, there are no precepts, to us seems evident from the holy scriptures. In the first revelation of it, made in these words, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," Gen. iii. 15, we find no precept, but a promise, containing glad tidings of a Saviour, with grace, mercy, life, and salvation in him, to lost sinners of Adam's family. And the gospel preached unto Abraham, namely, "In thee (i. e. in thy seed, which is Christ) shall all nations be blessed;" Gal. iii. 8, compared with Gen. xii. 3, xxii. 18; Acts iii. 25, is of the same nature. The good tidings of great joy to all people, of a Saviour born in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord, brought and proclaimed from heaven by the angels, Luke ii. 10, 11, we take to have been the gospel, strictly and properly so called, yet is there no precept in these tidings. We find likewise, the gospel of peace, and glad tidings of good things, are in scripture convertible terms, Rom. x. 15. And the word of the gospel, which Peter spoke to the Gentiles that they might believe, was no other than peace by Jesus Christ, crucified, risen and exalted to be Judge of quick and dead, with remission of sins through his name, to be received by every one believing in him, Acts xv. 7, xx. 36-43. Much more might be added on this head, which, that we be not tedious, we pass. See Luke iv. 18, compared with Isa. lxi. 1, 2; Acts xx. 24; 2 Tim. i. 10. Of the same mind, as to this point, we find the body of reformed divines; as, to instance in a few, Calvin, Chamier, Pemble, Wendelin, Alting, the professors of Leyden, Witsius, Mastrich, Maresius, Troughton, Essenius.

That all precepts (those of faith and repentance not excepted) belong to, and are of the law, is no less evident to us: For the law of creation, or of the Ten Commandments, which was given to Adam in paradise in the form of a covenant of works, requiring us to believe whatever God should reveal or promise, and to obey whatever he should command; all precepts whatsoever must be virtually and really included in it: So that there never was, nor can be, an instance of duty owing by the creature to God, not commanded in the moral law, if not directly and expressly, yet indirectly and by consequence. The same first command, for instance, which requires us to take the Lord for our God, to acknowledge his essential verity, and sovereign authority; to love, fear, and trust in Jehovah, after what manner soever he shall be pleased to reveal himself to us; and likewise to grieve and mourn for his dishonour or displeasure; requires believing in Jehovah our Righteousness, as soon as ever he is revealed to us as such, and sorrowing after a godly sort for the transgression of His holy law, whether by one's self or by others. It is true, Adam was not actually obliged to believe in a Saviour, till, being lost and undone, a Saviour was revealed to him; but the same command that bound him to trust and depend on, and to believe the promises of God Crea-



tor, no doubt obliged him to believe in God Redeemer, when revealed. Nor was Adam obliged to sorrow for sin ere it was committed: But this same law that bound him to have a sense of the evil of sin in its nature and effects, to hate, loathe, and flee from sin, and to resolve against it, and for all holy obedience, to have a due apprehension of the goodness of God, obliged him also to mourn for it, whenever it should fall out. And we cannot see how the contrary doctrine is consistent with the perfection of the law; for if the law be a complete rule of all moral, internal and spiritual, as well as external and ritual obedience, it must require faith and repentance, as well as it does all other good works: And that it does indeed require them, we can have no doubt, when we consider, that without them all other religious performances are in God's account as good as nothing; and that sin being, as the scripture, 1 John iii. 4, and our own standards tell us, any want of conformity to, or transgression of the law of God, unbelief and impenitency must be so too; and if they be so, then must faith and repentance be obedience and conformity to the same law, which the former are a transgression of, or an in-conformity unto; unbelief particularly, being a departing from the living God, Heb. iii. 12, is for certain forbidden in the first command; therefore faith must needs be required in the same command, Isa. xxvi. 4, according to a known rule. But what need we more, after our Lord has told us, that faith is one of the weightier matters of the law; Matth. xxiii. 23. And that it is not a second table duty, which is there meant, is evident to us, by comparing the parallel place in Luke, chap. xi. 42, where, in place of *faith*, we have *the love of God*. As for repentance, in case of sin against God, it becomes naturally a duty; and though neither the covenant of works or of grace admit of it, as any expiation of sin or federal condition giving right to life, it is a duty included in every command, on the supposal of a transgression.

What moves us to be the more concerned for this point of doctrine, is, That if the law does not bind sinners to believe and repent, then we see not how faith and repentance, considered as works, are excluded from our justification before God; since in that case they are not works of the law, under which character all works are in scripture excluded from the use of justifying in the sight of God. And we call to mind, that on the contrary doctrine Arminius laid the foundation of his rotten principles, touching sufficient grace, or rather natural power. "Adam," said he, "had not power to believe in Jesus Christ, because he needed him not; nor was he bound so to believe, because the law required it not: Therefore, since Adam by his fall did not lose it, God is bound to give every man power to believe in Jesus Christ." And Socinians, Arminians, Papists, and Baxterians, by holding the gospel to be a new, proper, preceptive law, with sanction, and thereby turning it into a real, though milder covenant of works, have confounded the law and the gospel, and brought works into the matter and cause of a sinner's justification before God. And, we reckon, we are the rather called to be on our guard here, that the clause in our representation, making mention of the new, or gospel law, is marked out to us as one of the grounds of this query, which we own to be somewhat alarming. Besides all this, the teaching that faith and repentance are gospel-commands, may yet again open the door to Antinomianism, as it sometimes did already, if we may believe



Mr. Cross, who says, "History tells us, that it sprung from such a mistake, that faith and repentance were taught and commanded by the gospel only, and that they contained all necessary to salvation; so the law was needless." \*

On this head also, namely, that all precepts belong to the law, we might likewise adduce a cloud of witnesses beyond exception, such as Pemble, Es-senius, Anthony Burgess, Rutherford, Owen, Witsius, Dickson, Fergusson, Troughton, Larger Catechism on the duties required and sins forbidden in the first commandment. But, without insisting further, we answer,

2. In the gospel, taken largely for the whole doctrine of Christ and the apostles, contained in the New Testament, or for a system of all the promises, precepts, threatenings, doctrines, histories, that any way concern man's recovery and salvation; in which respect, not only all the ten commandments but the doctrine of the covenant of works, belong to it, (but in this sense the gospel is not contradistinct from the law:) In the gospel, taken thus at large, we say, there are doubtless many precepts that were not actually given, (that is, particularly and expressly promulgate or required,) before the gospel was revealed. Love to our enemies, to instance in a few of many, mercy to the miserable, bearing of the cross, hope and joy in tribulations, in prospect of their having a desired issue, love, thankfulness, prayer, and obedience to a God-Redeemer, zealous witnessing against sin, and for truth, in case of defection from the faith or holiness of the gospel, confessing our faults to, and forgiving one another: all the ceremonial precepts under the Old Testament, together with the institutions of Christ under the New, faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with many more, to say nothing of personal and particular precepts, were not actually given before the gospel was revealed; all which are nevertheless reducible to the law of the ten commands, many of them being plain duties of the law of nature, though they had no due and proper objects, nor occasions of being exercised in an innocent state. It is true, there are many of them we had never heard of, without the gospel had been revealed; yet are they not therefore, in any proper sense, precepts of the gospel, but of the law, which is exceeding broad, extending to new objects, occasions, and circumstances. The law says one thing to the person unmarried, and another thing to the same person when married; one thing to him as a child, another thing to him as a parent, &c., yet is it the same law still. The law of God, being perfect, and like unto its author, must reach to every condition of the creature; but if for every new duty or new object of faith, there behoved to be a new law, how strangely must laws be multiplied? The law itself, (even in the case of a man,) may meet with many changes, and yet remain the same as to its essence. Now, as to faith and repentance, though ability to exercise them, and acceptance of them, be by the gospel; yet it is evident that they must be regulated by the same law, the transgression of which made them necessary. The essence of repentance, it is plain, lies in repeating and renewing, with a suitable frame of spirit, the duties omitted; or in observing the law one had formerly violated: For as the divine perfections are the rule and pattern of God's image in man, as well in his regeneration, as in his creation; so the holy law of God is the rule of our repentance, as well as of our primitive obedience.

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\*Sermon on Rom. iii. 27, page 165.



And why faith, when it has God-Mediator or God-Redeemer for its object, may not be from the same law as when it had God-Creator or God-Preserver for its object, we cannot see.

QUERY II. *Is not the believer now bound, by the authority of the Creator, to personal obedience to the moral law, though not in order to justification?*

Ans. What is given us for the ground of this query is the following clause of our Representation, viz.: "Since believers are not under it, to be thereby justified or condemned, we cannot comprehend how it continues any longer a covenant of works to them, or as such to have a commanding power over them, that covenant form of it being done away, in Christ, with respect to believers." \* This clause of the Representation being so much one, even in words, with our Confession, chap. 19, § 6, we could never have expected the Reverend Commission would have moved a query upon it; but since they have been pleased to think otherwise, we answer affirmatively—

The believer, since he ceases not to be a creature, by being made a new creature, is, and must ever be bound to personal obedience to the law of the ten commands, by the authority of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, his Creator: But this authority is, as to him, issued by and from the Lord Jesus Christ, at whose mouth he receives the law, being as well his Lord God Creator, as his Lord God Redeemer, and having all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him; nor can, nor will, the sinful creature ever apply himself to obedience, acceptable to God, or comfortable to himself, without the Creator's authority come to him in that channel.

We are clear and full of the same mind with our Confession, "That the moral law of the ten commandments doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of God the Creator, who gave it; and that Christ doth not in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation," chap. 19. For, how can it lose any thing of its original authority, by being conveyed to the believer in such a sweet and blessed channel as the hand of Christ, since both he himself is the supreme God and Creator, and since the authority, majesty, and sovereignty of the Father is in his Son, he being the same in substance, equal in power and glory? "Beware of him," says the Lord unto Israel, concerning Christ, the angel of the covenant, "and obey his voice; provoke him not, for my name is in him," *Exod. xxiii. 24*; that is, as we understand it, My authority, sovereignty, and other adorable excellencies, yea, the whole fulness of the Godhead is in him, and in him only will I be served and obeyed. And then it follows, "But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak," *ver. 22*. The name of the Father is so in him, he is so of the same nature with his Father, that his voice is the Father's voice. "If thou obey his voice, and do all that I speak."

We desire to think and speak honourably of him whose name is "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace;" and it cannot but exceedingly grate our ears, and grieve our spirits, to find such doctrines or positions vented in this church, especially at a time when the Arian heresy is so prevalent in our neighbour nations, as have an obvious tendency to darken and disparage his divine authority, as that, "If



a believer ought not to receive the law of the ten commandments at the hand of God, as he is Creator, out of Christ, then he is not under its obligation, as it was delivered by God the Creator, but is loosed from all obedience to it, as it was enacted by authority of the Lord Creator; and that it is injurious to the infinite majesty of the Sovereign Lord Creator, and to the honour of his holy law, to restrict the believer to receive the ten commands only at the hand of Christ." What can be more injurious to the infinite majesty of the Sovereign Lord Redeemer, by whom all things were created that are in heaven or in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, than to speak as if the Creator's authority was not in him; or, as if the receiving the Creator's law from Christ did loose men from obedience to it, as enacted by the authority of the Father. Wo unto us if this doctrine be the truth; for so should we be brought back to consuming fire indeed: For out of Christ, "he that made us will have no mercy on us; nor will he that formed us shew us any favour." We humbly conceive, the Father does not reckon himself glorified, but contemned, by Christians offering obedience to him as Creator out of Christ: Nor does the offering to deal with him after this sort, or to teach others so, discover a due regard to the mystery of Christ revealed in the gospel; for it is the will of the Father, the Sovereign Lord Creator, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour himself; and that at or in the name of Jesus, every knee should bow; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, who having in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, by whom also he made the world, and with an audible voice from heaven hath said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Were it not we would be thought tedious, Perkins, Durham, Owen, and others, might have been heard on this head. But we proceed to

QUERY III. *Doth the annexing of a promise of life, and a threatening of death to a precept, make it a covenant of works?*

We answer, as in our representation, That the promise of life and threatening of death superadded to the law of the Creator, made it a covenant of works to our first parents, proposed: And their own consent, which sinless creatures could not refuse, made it a covenant of works, accepted. "A law," saith the judicious Durham, "doth necessarily imply no more than, 1st, To direct; 2dly, To command; enforcing that obedience by authority. A covenant doth further necessarily imply promises made upon some conditions or threatenings added, if such a condition be not performed. Now, says he, this law may be considered without the consideration of a covenant; for it was free to God to have added, or not to have added promises; and the threatenings, upon supposition the law had been kept, might never have taken effect." Treatise on the commands, p. 4, quarto edit. From whence it is plain, in the judgment of this great divine, the law of nature was turned into a covenant by the addition of a promise of life, and threatening of death. Of the same mind is Burgess and the London Ministers, 'Vindiciæ Legis,' page 61. "There are only two things which go to the essence of a law; and that is, 1mo, Direction; 2do, Obligation. 1mo, Direction, therefore a law is a rule; hence the law of God is compared to light. 2do, Obligation; for therein lieth the essence of sin, that it breaketh this law, which supposes the



obligatory force of it. In the next place, there are two consequents of the law, which are, *ad bene esse*, that the law may be the better obeyed; and this indeed turneth the law into a covenant. 1st, The sanction of it by way of promise, that is a mere free thing; God, by reason of that dominion which he had over man, might have commanded his obedience, and yet never made a promise of eternal life unto him. And, 2dly, As for the other consequent act of the law, to curse and punish, this is but an accidental act, not necessary to a law; for it comes in upon supposition of transgression. — A law is a complete law, obliging though it do not actually curse; as in the confirmed angels, it never had any more than obligatory and mandatory acts upon them: For that they were under a law, is plain, because otherwise they could not have sinned: for where there is no law, there is no transgression.

Though there is no ground from our representation to add more on this head, yet we may say, that a promise of life made to a precept of doing, that is, in consideration or upon condition of one's doing, (be the doing more or less, it is all one, the divine will in the precept being the rule in this case,) is a covenant of works. And as to believers in Christ, though in the gospel, largely taken, we own there are promises of life, and threatenings of death, as well as precepts; and that godliness hath the promise, not only of this life, but of that which is to come, annexed to it, in the order of the covenant; yet we are clear, no promise of life is made to the performance of precepts, nor eternal death threatened, in case of their failing whatsoever in performing; else should their title to life be founded, not entirely on Christ, and his righteousness imputed to them, but on something in, or done by themselves: And their after sins should again actually bring them under vindictive wrath, and the curse of the law; which, upon their union with Christ, who was made a curse for them, to redeem them from under it, they are, according to scripture, Rom. vi. 14, 15; Rom. viii. 1; Gal. iii. 13, 4, 5; and our Confession, chap. 20, § 2. Chap. 11, § 5; for ever delivered from. — Hence we know of no sanction the law, standing in the covenant of grace, hath with respect to believers, besides gracious rewards, all of them freely promised on Christ's account, for their encouragement in obedience; and fatherly chastisement and displeasure, in case of their not walking in his commandments; Psal. lxxxix. 31, 33; 1 Cor. xi. 30, 32; Luke i. 20. Which to a believer are no less awful, and much more powerful restraint from sin, than the prospect of the curse and hell itself would be. The Reverend Commission will not, we hope, grudge to hear that eminent divine Mr. Perkins, in a few words, on this head, who having put the objection, "In the gospel, there are promises of life upon condition of our obedience, as Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye through the Spirit,' &c. *Ans.* 'The promises of the gospel are not made to the work, but to the worker; and to the worker, not for his work, but for Christ's sake according to his work; *e. g.* the promise of life is not made to the work of mortification, but to him that mortifies his flesh; and that not for his mortification, but because he is in Christ, and his mortification is the token and evidence thereof."\* This, as it is the old Protestant doctrine, so we take it to be the truth. And as to the believer's total and final freedom from the curse of the

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\* On Gal. page 236, in Fol.



law, upon his union with Christ, Protestant divines, particularly Rutherford and Owen, throughout their writings, are full and clear on the head.

QUERY IV. *If the moral law, antecedent to its receiving the form of a covenant of works, had a threatening of hell annexed to it?*

*Ans.* Since the law of God never was, nor will ever in this world be the stated rule, either of man's duty towards God, or of God's dealing with man, but as it stands in one of the two covenants of works and of grace, we are at a loss to discover the real usefulness of this query, as well as what foundation it hath in our representation.

As to the intrinsical demerit of sin, we are clear, whether there had ever been any covenant of works or not, it deserves hell, even all that an infinitely holy and just God ever has, or shall inflict for it: Yet what behoved to have been the Creator's disposal of the creature, in the supposed event of sin's entering without a covenant being made, we incline not here to dip into; but, we reckon, it is not possible to prove a threatening of hell to be inseparable from the law of creation, the obligation of which, because resulting from the nature of God and of the creature, is eternal and immutable: for confirmed angels, glorified saints, yea, and the human nature of Christ, are all of them naturally, necessarily, and eternally obliged to love, obey, depend on, and submit unto God, and to make him their blessedness and ultimate end; but none, we conceive, will be peremptory in saying, they have a threatening of hell annexed to the law they are under. And we can by no means allow, that a believer, delivered by Christ from the curse of the covenant of works, is still obnoxious, upon every new transgression, to the threatening of hell, supposed to be inseparably annexed to the law of creation, or of the ten commandments; which law every reasonable creature must for ever be under, since this would in effect be no other than, after he is delivered from hell in one respect, to bind him over to it in another. Whatever threatening one may suppose belonged to the moral law of the ten commandments, antecedently to its receiving a covenant form, all was, for certain, included in the sanction of the covenant of works: So that Christ, in bearing the curse of it, redeemed believers from the hell, vindictive wrath and curse, their sins in any sort deserved; the hand writing that was against them he cancelled, tore to pieces and nailed to the cross. Hence the threatening of hell and the curse are actually separated from the law of the ten commandments, which believers are under as a rule of life: And to hold otherwise, is the leading error, yea, the very spring and fountain-head of Antinomianism, on all which, Burgess, Rutherford, and others, may be heard.

QUERY V. *If it be peculiar to believers, to be free of the commanding power of the law, as a covenant of works?*

Though our saying, We cannot comprehend how the covenant of works, as such, continues to have a commanding power over believers, that covenant form of it being done away in Christ with respect to them,\* gives no sufficient foundation to this query, since we affirm nothing concerning any but believers, whose freedom from the commanding power of that covenant, the query seems, as much as we do, to allow of; we answer affirmatively; for, since it is only to believers the Spirit of God in scripture says, 'Ye are

\* Par. 4.



not under the law,' (the main import of which phrase is, subjection to the commanding power of it, as a covenant,) 'but under grace,' Rom. vi. 14; Gal. iv. 5, 21; and since they only are, by virtue of their union with Christ, actually freed from being under the law, by Christ's being made under it, (*i. e.* under its command, as above, as well as under its curse) for them; and since, according to our Confession, chap. 19, § 6, it is the peculiar privilege of believers, which therefore unbelievers have no interest in, not to be under the law as a covenant of works, to be justified or condemned thereby; we can allow no other, besides believers, to be invested with that immunity.

All unbelievers within, as well as without the pale of the visible church, since they seek righteousness only by the works of the law, and are strangers to the covenant of grace, we always took to be debtors to the whole law, in their own persons: and this their obligation under the *do*, or commanding power of that covenant, we took to be inviolably firm, till such time as by faith they had recourse to him, who "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" else we thought, and do still think, if their obligation to the command of that covenant be dissolved, merely by their living under an external gospel dispensation, they would be cast quite loose from being under any covenant at all; contrary to the common received doctrine of the Protestant churches, namely, That every person whatsoever is in and under one or other of the two covenants of works and grace: Nor could they, unless they be under the commanding power of the covenant of works, be ever found transgressors of the law of that covenant, by any actual sin of their own, nor be bound over anew under the covenant-curse thereby.

The covenant of works, it is true, is by the fall weak and ineffectual, as a covenant, to give us life, by reason of our weakness, and disability to fulfill it, being antecedently sinners, and obnoxious to its curse; which no person can be, and yet at the same time have a right unto its promise. Hence, for any to seek life and salvation by it now, is no other than to labour after an impossibility; yet does it nevertheless continue in full force as a law, requiring of all sinners, while they continue in their natural state, without taking hold by faith of Christ and the grace of the new covenant; requiring of them, we say, personal and absolutely perfect obedience, and threatening death upon every the least transgression: From the commanding power of which law, requiring universal holiness in such rigour, as that on the least failure in substance, circumstance, or degree, all is rejected, and we are determined transgressors of the whole law, believers, and they only, are freed, as we said above. "But to suppose a person," says Dr. Owen, "by any means freed from the curse due unto sin, and then to deny, that upon the performance of the perfect sinless obedience which the law requires, he should have right to the promise of life thereby, is to deny the truth of God, and to reflect dishonour upon his justice. Our Lord himself was justified by the law; and it is immutably true, That he who does the things of it, shall live in them." (On Justification, p. 345) "It is true," adds the same author, "that God did never formally and absolutely renew, or give again this law, as a covenant of works, a second time; nor was there any need that so he should do, unless it were declaratively only: And so it was renewed at Sinai; for the whole of it being an emanation of eternal right and truth, it abides,



and must abide in full force forever. Wherefore it is only so far broke as a covenant, that all mankind having sinned against the command of it, and so by guilt, with the impotency to obedience, which ensued thereupon, defeated themselves of any interest in its promise, and possibility of attaining any such interest, they cannot have any benefit by it. But as to its power to oblige all mankind unto obedience, and the unchangeable truths of its promises and threatenings, it abides the same as it was from the beginning.”—(Ibid.) “The introducing of another covenant,” adds he again on the same head, “inconsistent with and contrary to it, does not instantly free men from the law as a covenant ; for, though a new law abrogates a former law inconsistent with it, and frees all from obedience, it is not so in a covenant, which operates not by sovereign authority, but becomes a covenant by consent of them with whom it is made. So there is no freedom from the old covenant, by the constitution of the new, till it be actually complied with : In Adam’s covenant we must abide under obligation to duty and punishment, till by faith we be interested in the new.”—(Ibid. 351.)

From all which it appears to be no cogent reasoning to say, If the unbeliever be under the commanding power of the covenant of works, then would he be under two opposite commands at once, viz. : to seek a perfect righteousness in his own person, and to seek it also by faith in a Surety : For, though the law requires of us now both active and passive righteousness in our own persons ; and likewise, upon the revelation of Jesus Christ in the gospel, as Jehovah our righteousness, obliges us to believe in, and submit to him as such ; yet as it is in many other cases of duties, the law requires both these of us, not *in senso composito*, as they say, but *in senso diviso*. The law is content to sustain, and hold for good, the payment of a responsible surety, though itself provides none ; and wills us, being insolvent ourselves, cheerfully, thankfully, and without delay, to accept of the non-such favour offered unto us : But till the sinner, convinced of his undoneness otherwise, accept of, use and plead that benefit in his own behalf, the law will, and does go on, in its just demands, and diligence against him : Having never had pleasure in the sinful creature, by reason of our unfaithfulness, it can easily admit of the marriage to another husband, upon a lawful divorce, after fair count and reckoning, and full satisfaction and reparation made for all the invasions upon, and violation of, the first husband’s honour ; but when the sinner, unwilling to hear of any such motion, still cleaves to the law, its first husband, what wonder the law, in that case, go on to use the sinner as he deserves ? In short, this pretended absurdity, at worst, amounts to no more than this : Make full payment yourself, or find me good and sufficient payment by a surety, till which time I will continue to proceed against you, without mitigation or mercy. Wherefore the unbeliever is justly condemned by the law, both because he did not continue in all things written in the book of the law to do them, and because he did not believe on the name of the Son of God.

QUERY VI. *If a sinner, being justified, has all things at once that is necessary for salvation ? And if personal holiness, and progress in holy obedience, is not necessary to a justified person’s possession of glory, in case of his continuing in life after his justification ?*

Ans. The ground of this query, marked out to us, is in these words of holy Luther : “For in Christ I have all things at once ; neither need I any



thing more that is necessary unto salvation." And to us it is evident, that this is the believer's plea, viz.: Christ's most perfect obedience to the law for him, in answer unto its demand of good works for obtaining salvation, according to the tenor of the first covenant; which plea the Representation alleges to be cut off, and condemned by the act of Assembly.\* But without saying any thing of the old Popish reflection on the doctrine of free justification by faith without works, as it was taught by Luther and other reformers, or the hardship of having this question put to us, as if we had given ground of being suspected for enemies to gospel holiness, which, our consciences bear us witness, is our great desire to have advanced in ourselves and others, as being fully persuaded, that without it neither they nor we shall see the Lord,—we answer to the first part of the query,

That since a justified person, being passed from death to life, translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, is, by virtue of his union with him, brought into, and secured in a state of salvation; and therefore, in the language of the Holy Ghost, actually, though not completely, saved already; and since, in him, he has particularly, a most perfect, law-biding, and law-magnifying righteousness, redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, peace with God, access, acceptance, wisdom, sanctification, everlasting strength, and in one word, an overflowing, everflowing fulness, from which, according to the order of the covenant, he does, and shall receive whatever he wants: Hence, according to the scripture, in Christ all things are his, and in him he is complete: Considering, we say, these things, we think a justified person has in Christ, at once, all things necessary to salvation, though of himself he has nothing.

To the second part of the query, we answer, that personal holiness and justification being inseparable in the believer, we are unwilling, so much as the query does, to suppose their separation. Personal holiness we reckon so necessary to the possession of glory, or to a state of perfect holiness and happiness, as is the morning light to the noon-day warmth and brightness; as is a reasonable soul to a wise, healthy, strong, and full-grown man; as an antecedent is to its consequent; as a part is to the whole, (for the difference betwixt a state of grace and of glory we take to be gradual only, according to the usual saying, 'Grace is glory begun, and glory, grace in perfection.') So necessary, again, as motion is to evidence life, or, in order to walking; not only habitual, but actual holiness, and progress in holy obedience, one continuing in life, we are clear are so necessary, that without the same none can see the Lord. And as it is not only the believer's interest, but his necessary and indispensable duty, to be still going on "from strength to strength, until he appear before the Lord in Zion; so the righteous, we believe, will hold on his way, and he who is of clean hands will grow stronger and stronger:" For though the believer's progress in holy obedience, by reason of the many stops, interruptions, and assaults, he frequently meets with from Satan, the world, and indwelling corruption, is far from being alike at all times; "yet the path of the just, though he frequently fall, will be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day:" Though he may at times become "weary and faint in his mind; yet shall he, by waiting on

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\* Par. 6, 11.



the Lord, renew his strength, and mount up as with eagle's wings," &c. But still the believer has all this in and from Christ : For, whence can our progress in holiness come, but from the supply of his Spirit? Our walking in holy obedience, and every good motion of ours, must be in him, and from him, who is the way and the life, who is our head of influences, and the fountain of our strength, and who "works in us both to will and to do."—"Abide in me," says he, "and I in you : For without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered."

But if the meaning of the query be, of such a necessity of holy obedience, in order to the possession of glory, as imports any kind of casuality, we dare not answer in the affirmative; for we cannot look on personal holiness, or good works, as properly federal and conditional means of obtaining the possession of heaven, though we own they are necessary to make us meet for it.

QUERY VII. *Is preaching the necessity of a holy life, in order to the obtaining of eternal happiness, of dangerous consequence to the doctrine of free grace?*

Ans. The last of the two clauses of the eighth act of Assembly, being complained of in the Representation, is the first and main ground of this query.\* And ere we make answer to it, we crave leave to explain ourselves more fully, as to the offence we conceive to be given by that act; namely, That in opposition to, and in place of the believer's plea of Christ's active righteousness, in answer to the law, demanding good works, for obtaining salvation according to the tenor of the first covenant, cut off, as we apprehend, by the fifth act; ministers are ordered, in the eighth act, to preach the necessity of our own personal holiness, in order to the obtaining of everlasting happiness. As also, that our inherent holiness seems to be put too much upon the same foot, in point of necessity for obtaining everlasting happiness, with justification by the Surety; which the frame of the words, being as follows, will well admit, viz.: "Of free justification through our blessed Surety the Lord Jesus Christ, received by faith alone; and of the necessity of an holy life, in order to the obtaining of everlasting happiness." Moreover, that the great fundamental of justification is laid down in such general terms, as adversaries will easily agree to, without mention of the Surety's righteousness, active or passive, or the imputation of either; especially since a motion in open assembly, for adding the few but momentous words, 'imputed righteousness,' was slighted. And finally, That that act is so little adapted to the end it is now given out to have been designed for, viz.: a testimony of the supreme Godhead of our glorious God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and against Arianism; especially since not the least intimation or warning against that damnable heresy is to be found in the act itself, nor was made to that Assembly in passing of it.

To the query, we answer, That we cordially and sincerely own a holy life, or good works, necessary, as an acknowledgment of God's sovereignty, and in obedience to his command; for this is the will of God, even our sanctification; and, by a special ordination, he has appointed believers to walk in them: Necessary, for glorifying God before the world, and shewing the virtues of him who hath called us out of darkness into this marvellous light: Necessary, as being the end of our election, our redemption, effectual calling, and,

\* Par. 16, 15.



regeneration ; for, “the Father chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy. The Son gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ;” and by the Holy Spirit we are created in Christ Jesus unto them : Necessary, as expressions of our gratitude to our great benefactor ; for, being bought with a price, we are no more our own, but henceforth in a most peculiar manner bound, in our bodies, and in our spirits, which are his, to glorify, and by all possible ways to testify our thanksgiving to our Lord Redeemer and Ransomer ; “to him who spared not his own Son, but gave him up to the death for us all ; to him who humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross for us :” Necessary, as being the design, not only of the word, but of all ordinances and providences ; even that as “he who has called is holy, so we should be holy in all manner of conversation :” Necessary again, for evidencing and confirming our faith, good works being the breath, the native offspring and issue of it : Necessary, for making our calling and election sure ; for they are, though no plea, a good evidence for heaven, or an argument confirming our assurance and hope of salvation : Necessary, to the maintaining of inward peace and comfort, though not as the ground or foundation, yet as effects, fruits, and concomitants of faith : Necessary, in order to our entertaining communion with God, even in this life ; for, “if we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth :” Necessary, to the escaping of judgments, and to the enjoying of many promised blessings ; particularly, there is a necessity of order and method, that one be holy ere he can be admitted to see and enjoy God in heaven ; that being a disposing mean preparing for the salvation of it, and the king’s highway chalked out for the redeemed to walk into the city : Necessary, to adorn the gospel, and grace our holy calling and profession : Necessary, further, for the edification, good, and comfort of fellow-believers : Necessary, to prevent offence, and to stop the mouths of the wicked ; to win likewise the unbelieving, and to commend Christ and his ways to their consciences : Necessary, finally, for the establishment, glory, and the security of churches and nations. Though we firmly believe holiness necessary upon all these, and more accounts, and that the Christian ought to live in the continued exercise of gospel-repentance, which is one main constituent of gospel-holiness ; yet we dare not say, a holy life is necessary in order to the obtaining of eternal happiness. For, to say nothing of the more gross sense of these words, (manifestly injurious to the free grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith in whose righteousness alone we are appointed to obtain salvation, from first to last,) which yet is obvious enough, though we are far from imputing it to the Assembly ; we cannot, however they may be explained into an orthodox meaning, look upon them as wholesome words, since they have at least an appearance of evil, being such a way of expression as Protestant churches and divines, knowing the strong natural bias in all men towards seeking salvation, not by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, but by works of righteousness done by themselves, and the danger of symbolizing with Papists, and other enemies of the grace of the gospel, have industriously shunned to use on that head ; they chusing rather to call holiness and good works necessary duties of the persons justified and saved, than conditions of salvation, consequents



and effects of salvation already obtained, or antecedents, disposing and preparing the subject for the salvation to be obtained, than any sort of causes, or proper means of obtaining the possession of salvation ; which last honour the scripture, for the high praise and glory of sovereign grace, seems to have reserved peculiarly unto faith : And rather to say that holiness is necessary to them that shall be saved, than necessary to salvation : That we are saved not by good works, but rather to them, as fruits and effects of saving grace ; or that holiness is necessary until salvation, not so much as a mean to the end, as a part of the end itself ; which part of our salvation is necessary to make us meet for the other that is yet behind.

Wherefore, since this way of speaking of holiness with respect to salvation, is, we conceive, without warrant in the holy scripture, dissonant from the doctrinal standards of our own and other reformed churches, as well as from the chosen and deliberate speech of reformed divines treating on these heads ; and since it, being at best but *propositio male sonans*, (a proposition sounding ill,) may easily be mistaken, and afterwards improved, as a shade or vehicle, for conveying corrupt sentiments, anent the influence of works upon salvation : We cannot but reckon preaching the necessity of holiness in such terms to be of some dangerous consequence to the doctrine of free grace. In which apprehension we are the more confirmed, that at this day the doctrine of Christ, and his free grace, both as to the purity and efficacy of the same, seems to be much on the wane, and Popery, with other dangerous errors and heresies destructive of it, on the waxing : which certainly calls aloud to the churches of Christ, and to his ministers in particular, for the more zeal, watchfulness, and caution, with reference to the interests of truth ; and that especially at such a time, *Cum heretics nec nomina habeamus communia, ne eorum errori faveri videamur*.

If in any case, certainly in framing acts and standards of doctrine, there is great need of delicacy in the choice of words : For the words of the Holy Ghost in scripture, under which we include such as in meaning and import are equivalent to them, being an ordinance of divine institution, for preserving the truth of the gospel, if these be once altered or varied, all the wisdom and vigilance of men will be ineffectual to that end. And it is well known, by costly experience to the churches of Christ, that their falling in with the language or phrase of corrupt teachers, instead of serving the interest of truth, which never looks so well as in its own native simplicity, does but grieve the stable and judicious, stagger the weak, betray the ignorant, and, instead of gaining, harden and open the mouths of adversaries. And that it is said in a text, "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible," will not warrant the manner of speech in the query: For the word in the original, signifies only to receive or apprehend, being accordingly rendered in all Latin versions we have seen, and in our own translation, in the verse immediately proceeding, viz. : "One receiveth the prize;" and though the word did signify to obtain, in the most strict and proper sense, it could not make for the purpose, unless it were meant of the believer's obtaining the incurruptible crown, not by faith, but by works. And that an ill chosen word in a standard may prove more dangerous to the truth, than one not so justly rendered in a translation, with several other things on this head, might be made very evident, were it not that we have been, we fear, tedious on it already.



\* QUERY VIII. *Is knowledge, belief and persuasion that Christ died for me, and that he is mine, and that whatever he did and suffered, he did and suffered for me, the direct act of faith, whereby a sinner is united to Christ, interested in him, instated in God's covenant of grace? Or, is that knowledge of persuasion included in the very essence of that justifying act of faith?*

*Ans.* The query, it is evident, exceedingly narrows the import and design of the Representation in the place referred to:\* For there we assert nothing positively concerning the passages relating to faith, but remonstrate against condemning them, as what to us seemed to hurt the appropriating act of faith, and to fix a blot upon the reformation, reformed churches and divines who had generally taught concerning faith as in the condemned passages; all which we might say, without determining whether the persuasion spoke of in the query, was the very direct and formal act of justifying faith, yea or no. But now, since the query is put so close, and since the matter in question is no other than the old Protestant doctrine on that head, as we shall endeavor to make appear, the Reverend Commission, we humbly conceive, cannot take it amiss, we, in the first place, inquire into the true sense and meaning of this way of speaking of faith, that we are now questioned about.

The main of the condemned passages the query refers to, runs not in the order therein set down, but as follows: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved; that is, be verily persuaded in your heart that Christ Jesus is yours, and that you shall have life and salvation by him; that whatever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for you; being in matter the same with what has been commonly taught in the Protestant churches, and in words of the renowned Mr. John Rogers of Dedham (a man so noted for orthodoxy, holiness, and the Lord's countenancing of his ministry, that no sound Protestants in Britain or Ireland, of what denomination soever, would in the age wherein he lived, have taken upon them to condemn as erroneous) his definition of faith, which we have as follows: "A particular persuasion of my heart, that Christ Jesus is mine, and that I shall have life and salvation by his means; that whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for me."† Where one may see, though the difference in words be almost none at all, yet it runs rather stronger with him, than in the Marrow.

In which account of saving faith, we have, first, The general nature of it, viz. a real persuasion, agreeing to all sorts of faith whatsoever; for, it is certain, whatever one believes he is verily persuaded of. More particularly, it is a persuasion in the heart, whereby it is distinguished from a general, dead and naked assent in the head, which one gives to things that no way affect him, because he reckons they do not concern him. "But with the heart man believes here: If thou believest with all thine heart," says the scripture, Acts viii. 37; Rom. x. 10. For as man's believing in his heart the dreadful tidings of the law, or its curse, imports not only an assent to them as true, but a horror of them as evil; so here the being persuaded in one's heart of the glad tidings of the gospel, bears not only an assent unto them as true, but a relish of them as good.

Then we have the most special nature of it, viz. an appropriating persua-

\* Par. 7.

† Doctrine of faith, page 23.



sion, or a persuasion with application to a person's self, that Christ is his, &c. The particulars whereof are, *first*, That Christ is yours; the ground of which persuasion is the offer and grant of Christ as a Saviour in the word, to be believed in for salvation, by all to whom the gospel is made known: By which offer, and setting forth of Christ as a Saviour, though before we believe we, wanting union with him, have no actual or saving interest in him, yet he is in some sense ours,\* namely, so as it is lawful and warrantable for us, not for fallen angels, to take possession of him, and of his salvation by faith; without which, our common interest in him as a Saviour, by virtue of the offer and grant in the word, will avail us nothing. But though, the call and offer of the gospel being really particular, every one, both in point of duty and in point of interest, ought to appropriate, apply, or make his own the thing offered by believing, they having good and sufficient ground and warrant in the word so to do; yet it is either neglected and despised, or the truth and sincerity of it suspected and called in question, until the Holy Spirit, by setting home the word of the gospel with such a measure of evidence and power as is effectual, satisfies the convinced sinner, that, with application to himself in particular, "it is a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners;" and enables him to believe it. Thus the persuasion of faith is begot, which is always proportioned to the measure of evidence and power from above, that sovereign grace is pleased to put forth for working of it.

The *next* branch of the persuasion is, That you shall have life and salvation by him, namely, the life of holiness, as well as of happiness; salvation from sin as well as from wrath, not in heaven only, but begun, carried on here, and completed hereafter: The true notion of life and salvation according to the scriptures, and as Protestant divines are wont to explain it. Wherefore this persuasion of faith is inconsistent with an unwillingness to part with sin, a bent or purpose of heart to continue in it. There can be little question, we apprehend, whether this branch of the persuasion belongs to the nature of justifying faith: For salvation being above all things in a sensible sinner's eye, he can never believe any thing to his satisfaction, without he sees ground to believe comfortably concerning it: Few therefore will, we conceive, differ from Dr. Collins, laying it down as a conclusion on this very head, namely, That "a Christian cannot have true, saving, justifying faith, unless he doth (I, says he, do not say, unless he think he doth, or unless he saith he doth, but unless he doth) believe, and is persuaded that God will pardon his sins." (Cordial, part I. p. 208.) Further, this believing on the Son for life and salvation, is the same with receiving of him (as this last is explained by the Holy Spirit himself, John i 12,) and likewise evidently bears the soul's resting on Christ for salvation, without a persuasion that it shall have life and salvation by him; namely, a persuasion of the same measure and degree as resting is.

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\* To any person acquainted with the works of the Representers, Boston, Erskines, &c., it is evident, they held, that a belief of the promises of the gospel with *application to one's self*, or a confidence in a crucified Saviour for a man's own salvation, is the essence of justifying faith; this, with them, was the assurance of faith, which widely differs from the Antinomian sense of the assurance or persuasion of faith, which is, that Christ and pardon of sin *are ours in possession* no less before believing,—a sense which the Marrow-men and all evangelical writers disclaim.



The *third* branch of the persuasion, "That whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for you," being much the same, in other words, with these of the apostle, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me;" and coming in the last place, we think none will question, but whosoever believes in the manner before explained, may and ought to believe this in the like measure, and in the same order: And, it is certain, all who receive and rest on Christ for salvation, believe it, if not explicitly, yet virtually and really.

Now, as this account of justifying faith runs in terms much less strong than those of many eminent Protestant divines, who used to define it by a persuasion of God's love; of his special mercy to one's self; of the remission of his sins, &c.; so it is the same for substance and matter, though the words be not the same, with that of our Shorter Catechism, viz. "A receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel:" Where it is evident, the offer of Christ to us, though mentioned in the last place, is to be believed first: For till the soul be persuaded, that Christ crucified is in the gospel set forth, offered, and exhibited to it, as if expressed by name, there can be no believing on him: And when the offer is brought home to a person by the Holy Ghost, there will be a measure of persuasion that Christ is his, as above explained: And that receiving or believing in and resting on him for life and salvation by him, was said already. But more directly to the query,

We answer, *1mo*, Since our reformers and their successors, such as Luther, Calvin, Melancton, Beza, Bullinger, Bucer, Knox, Craig, Melvil, Bruce, Davidson, Forbes, &c., men eminently endowed with the Spirit of truth, and who fetch their actions of it immediately from the fountain of the holy scripture, the most eminent doctors and professors of theology that have been in the Protestant churches, such as Ursinias, Zanchius, Junius, Piscator, Rollock, Danæus, Wendelinus, Chamierus, Sharpus, Bodius, Pareus, Altingius, Triglandii (Gisbertus and Jacobus), Arnoldus, Maresius, the four professors of Leyden, viz. Wallæus, Heidegerus, Essenius, Turretinus, &c.; with many eminent British divines, such as Perkins, Pemble, Willet, Gouge, Roberts, Burgess, Owen, &c.; the churches themselves of Helvetia, the Palatinate, France, Holland, England, Ireland, Scotland, in their standards of doctrine; all the Lutheran churches, who in point of orthodoxy and faith are second to none; the renowned synod of Dort, made up of eminent divines, called an commissionate from seven reformed states and kingdoms, besides these of the several provinces of the Netherlands;—since these, we say all of them, stand for their special *fiducia*, confidence, or appropriating persuasion of faith spoke of in the condemned passages of the Marrow, upon which this query is raised; the synod of Dort, besides the minds of the several delegates on this head, in their several suffrages anent the five articles, declaring themselves plainly, both in their final decisions concerning the said articles, and in their solemn and ample approbation of the Palatine Catechism, as agreeable to the word of God in all things, and as containing nothing that ought to be either altered or amended: Which catechism being full and plain, as to this persuasion of faith, has been commented upon by many great divines, received by most of all the reformed churches, as a most excellent compend of the orthodox Christian doctrine; and particularly by the church



of Scotland, as the Rev. Mr. Robert Wedrow lately told his present Majesty King George, in the dedication of his history: and since we, with this whole church and nation are, by virtue of the awful tie of the oath of God in our National Covenant, bound ever to abhor and detest the Popish “general and doubtful faith, with all the erroneous decrees of Trent;” among which (in opposition to the special *fiducia*, therein condemned) this is established; being by Protestants, so called, mainly for their denying and opposing the confidence and persuasion of faith, with application to one’s self, now in question; by which renunciation our forefathers, no doubt, pointed at, and asserted to be held and professed as God’s undoubted truth and verity, that particular and confident, or assured faith, then commonly known and maintained in this church, as standing plain and express in her standards; to the profession and defence of which, they in the same covenant promising and swearing by the great name of the Lord our God, bound themselves and us: And since the same persuasion of faith, however the way of speaking on that head is come to be somewhat altered, was never by any judicatory of a reformed church, until now, denied or condemned: Considering all these things, we say, and of what dangerous consequence such a judicial alteration may be, we cannot, we dare not consent unto the condemnation of that point of doctrine: For we cannot think of charging error or delusion in a matter of such importance, upon so many Protestant divines, eminent for holiness and learning; upon the Protestant churches; and upon our own forefathers, so signally owned of the Lord; and also on the standards of Protestant doctrine in this church, for nigh an hundred years after her reformation; Else, if we should thus speak, we are persuaded we would offend against the generation of his children. Nor can it ever enter into our minds, that the famous Assembly of Westminster had it so much as once in their thoughts to depart in this point from the doctrine of their own, and of this church, which they were all of them by the strongest ties bound to maintain; or to go off from the synod of Dort, which had but so lately before them settled the Protestant principles as to doctrine; and by so doing, yield up to Socinians, Arminians, and Papists, what all of them have a mortal aversion to, namely, the special *fiducia*, or appropriating persuasion of faith, which Protestant divines before and since that time contended for to their utmost, as being not only a precious truth, but a point of vast consequence to religion. And we are sure, the Assemblies of this church understood and received, their Confessions and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, as entirely consistent with our Confessions and Catechisms before that time, as we have already made evident in our Representation, from the acts of Assembly, receiving and approving the Westminster Confession and Catechisms.

Answer 2<sup>d</sup>, It is to be considered, that most of the words of the Holy Ghost, made use of in the Old and New Testament, for expressing the nature of faith and believing, do import the confidence or persuasion in question. And that confidence and trust in the Old Testament, are expounded by faith and believing in the New; and the same things attributed to the former; that diffidence and doubting are in their nature, acts and effects, contrary to faith: that peace and joy are the native effects of believing: that the promises of the gospel, and Christ in his priestly office therein held forth, are the proper objects of justifying faith: that faithfulness in God, and faith



in the believer, being relatives, and the former the ground of the latter, our faith should answer to his faithfulness, by trusting to his word of promise for the sake of it: That it is certain, a believer, in the exercise of justifying faith, does believe something with reference to his own salvation, upon the ground of God's faithfulness in the promise; which if it be not to this purpose, that now Christ is and will be a Saviour to him, that he shall have life and salvation by him, we are utterly at a loss to conceive what it can be. That persuasion, confidence, and assurance, are so much attributed to faith in the scripture, and the saints in scripture ordinarily express themselves in their addresses to God, in words of appropriation. And finally, That according to our Larger Catechism, faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, as an instrument, receiving and applying Christ, and his righteousness held forth in the promise of the gospel, and resteth thereupon for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting one's person righteous before God for salvation; the which how faith can do without some measure of the confidence or appropriating persuasion we are now upon, seems extremely hard to conceive. Upon these considerations, and others too long to be here inserted, we cannot but think, that confidence, or trust in Jesus Christ, as our Saviour, and the free grace and mercy of God in him as crucified, offered to us in the gospel for salvation, (including justification, sanctification and future glory,) upon the ground and security of the divine faithfulness, pledged in the gospel-promise; and upon the warrant of the divine call and command to believe in the name of the Son of God: Or, which is the same in other words, a persuasion of life and salvation, from the free love and mercy of God, in and through Jesus Christ; a crucified Saviour offered to us upon the security and warrant aforesaid, is the very direct, uniting, justifying and appropriating act of faith, whereby the convinced sinner becomes possessed of Christ and his saving benefits, instated in God's covenant and family: Taking this always along, as supposed, that all is set home and wrought by the Holy Spirit, who brings Christ, his righteousness, salvation, and wholefulness, nigh to us in the promise and offer of the gospel; clearing at the same time our right and warrant to intermeddle with all, without fear of vitious intromission, encouraging and enabling to a measure of confident application, and taking home to ourselves freely, without money, and without price.

This confidence, persuasion, or whatever other name it may be called by, we take to be the very same with what our Confession and Catechism call accepting, receiving, and resting on Christ offered in the gospel for salvation; and with what polemic and practical divines call *fiducia specialis misericordie*, fiducial application, fiducial apprehension, fiducial adherence, recumbence, affiance, fiducial acquiescence, appropriating persuasion, &c. All which, if duly explained, would issue in a measure of this confidence or persuasion we have been speaking of. However, we are fully satisfied, this is what our fathers, and the body of Protestant divines, speaking with the scriptures, called the Assurance of Faith. That once burning and shining light of this church, Mr. John Davidson, though in his Catechism he defines faith by a hearty assurance, that our sins are freely forgiven us in Christ; or, a sure persuasion of the heart, that Christ by his death and resurrection hath taken away our sins, and, clothing us with his own perfect righteous-



ness, has thoroughly restored us to the favour of God; which he reckoned all one with a "heartly receiving of Christ offered in the gospel for the remission of sins:" Yet in a former part of the same Catechism, he gives us to understand what sort of assurance and persuasion it was he meant, as follows: "And certain it is," says he, "that both the enlightening of the mind to acknowledge the truth of the promise of salvation to us in Christ, and the sealing up of the certainty thereof in our hearts and minds, (of the whilk twa parts, as it were, faith consists,) are the works and effects of the Spirit of God." In like manner, in our Confession of Faith,\* it is called, "An assured faith in the promise of God, revealed to us in his word; by which faith we apprehend Jesus Christ, with the graces and benefits promised in him.

— This faith, and the assurance of the same, proceeds not from flesh and blood." And in our first Catechism, commonly called Calvin's Catechism, faith is defined by a sure persuasion and stedfast knowledge of God's tender love towards us, according as he has plainly uttered in the gospel, that he will be a Father and Saviour to us, through the means of Jesus Christ; and again, faith which God's Spirit worketh in our hearts, assuring of God's promises made to us in his holy gospel. In the *Summula Catechismi*, or *Rudimenta Pietatis*, to the Question, *Quid est fides?* the Answer is, *Cum mihi persuadeo Deum me omnesque sanctos amare, nobisque Christum cum omnibus suis bonis gratis donare;* and in the margin, *Nam in fide duplex persuasio, 1. De amore Dei erga nos. 2. De Dei beneficiis qua ex amore fluunt, Christo nimirum, cum omnibus sui bonis, &c.* And to that Question, *Quomodo fide percipimus, and nobis applicamus corpus Christi crucifixi?* the Answer is, *Dum nobis persuademus Christi mortem and crucifixionem non minus ad nos pertinere quam si ipsi nos pro peccatis nostris crucifixi essemus. Persuasio autem hæc est veræ fidei.* From all which it is evident they held, that a belief of the promises of the gospel, with application to one's self, or a confidence in a crucified Saviour for a man's own salvation, is the very essence of justifying faith; or, that we become actually possessed of Christ, remission of sins, &c., in and by the act of believing, or confidence in him, as above explained. And this with them was the assurance of faith, which widely differs from the Antinomian sense of the assurance or persuasion of faith, which is, that Christ, and pardon of sin, are ours, no less before believing than after; a sense which we heartily disclaim.

Whether these words in the query, viz. Or, is that knowledge a persuasion included in the very essence of that justifying act of faith? be exegetic of the query; We answer, That we have already explained the persuasion of faith by us held, and do think, that in the language of faith, though not in the language of philosophy, knowledge and persuasion, relating to the same object, go hand in hand in the same measure and degree.

It is evident, that the confidence or persuasion of faith, for which we plead, includes, or necessarily and infallibly infers, consent and resting, together with all the blessed fruits and effects of faith, in proportion to the measure of it. And that we have mentioned consent, we cannot but be the more confirmed in this matter, when we consider, that such a noted person as Mr. Baxter, though he had made the marriage-consent to Christ, as King and Lord, the formal act of justifying faith, as being an epitome of all gos-

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\* Art. 3, 12.



pel-obedience, including and binding to all the duties of the married state, and so giving right to all the privileges; and had thereby, as well as by his other dangerous notions about justification and other points connected therewith, scattered through his works, corrupted the fountain, and endangered the faith of many; yet, after all, came to be of another mind, and had the humility to tell the world so much: For Mr. Cross informs us,\* that Mr. Baxter, in his little book against Dr. Crisp's error, says, "I formerly believed the formal nature of faith to lie in consent, but now I recant it: I believe (says he) it lies in trust; this makes the right to lie in the object: for it is, I depend on Christ as the matter or merit of my pardon, my life, my crown, my glory."

There are two things further, concerning this persuasion of faith, that should be adverted to. One is, that it is not axiomatical, but real, i. e. the sinner has not always, at his first closing with Christ, nor afterwards, such a clear, steady, and full persuasion that Christ is his, that his sins are forgiven, and he eventually shall be saved; as that he dare profess the same to others, or even positively assert it within himself: Yet, upon the first saving manifestation of Christ to him, such a persuasion and humble confidence is begotten, as is real and relieving, and particular as to himself and his own salvation, and which works a proportionable hope as to the issue; though, through the humbling impressions he has of himself, and his own guilt at the time, the awe of God's majesty, justice, and holiness on his spirit, and his indistinct knowledge of the doctrine of the gospel, with the grounds and warrants of believing therein contained, he fears to express it directly and particularly of himself. The other is, that whatever is said of the habit, actings, strength, weakness, and intermittings of the exercise of saving faith, the same is to be said of this persuasion in all points. From all which it is evident, the doubts, fears, and darkness so frequently to be found in true believers, can very well consist with this persuasion in the same subject: For though they may be, and often are, in the true believer, yet they are not of his faith, which, in its nature and exercise, is as opposite to them as light is to darkness, the flesh to the spirit; which, though they be in the same subject, yet as contrary the one to the other, Gal. v. 17. And therefore faith wrestles against them, though with various success, it being sometimes so far overcome and brought under by the main force and much superior strength of prevailing unbelief, that it cannot be discerned more than the fire is when covered with ashes, or the sun when wrapped up in thick clouds. The confidence and persuasion of faith being in many, at first especially, as the grain of mustard seed cast into the ground, or like a spark amidst the troubled sea of all manner of corruption and lusts, where the rolling waves of unbelieving doubts and fears, hellish temptations and suggestions, and the like, moving on the face of that deep, are every now and then going over it; and were there not a divine hand and care engaged for its preservation, would effectually extinguish and bury it: What wonder that in such a case it many times cannot be discerned? Yet will it still hold, so much of the exercise of justifying faith, so much persuasion. Yea, not only may a believer have this persuasion, and not know of it for the time (as say Collins, Roberts, Ame-

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\* Ser. on Rom. iv. 2, p. 148.



sius, and others, who distinguish the persuasion from the sense of it), but he, being under the power of temptation and confusion of mind, may resolutely deny he has any such persuasion or confidence; while it is evident to others at the same time, by its effects, that he really has it: For which, one may, among others, see the holy and learned Mr. Halyburton, in his Inquiry into the nature of God's act of justification.\* And if one would see the consistence of faith's persuasion with doubting, well discoursed and illustrated, he may consult Downbame's Christian warfare.† But we

*Answer 3dly,* There is a full persuasion and assurance, by reflection, spiritual argumentation, or inward sensation, which we are far from holding to be of the essence of faith; but this last, being mediate, and collected by inference, as we gather the cause from such signs and effects as give evidence of it, is very different from that confidence or persuasion, by divines called the "assurance of faith." Sanctification, says Rutherford, does not evidence justification, as faith doth evidence it, with such a sort of clearness, as light evidenceth colours, though it be no sign, or evident mark of them; but as smoke evidenceth fire, and as the morning star in the east evidenceth the sun will shortly rise; or as the streams prove there is a head-spring whence they issue; though none of these make what they evidence visible to the eye: So doth sanctification give evidence of justification, only as marks, signs, effects, give evidence of the cause. He calls it a light of arguing, and of heavenly logic, by which we know, that we know God by the light of faith, because we keep his commandments. In effect, says he, "we know rather the person must be justified, in whom these gracious evidences are by hearsay, report, or consequence, than that we know or see justification or faith itself *in abstracto*: But the light of faith, the testimony of the Spirit by the operation of free grace, will cause us, as it were with our eyes, see justification and faith, not by report; but as we see the sun-light." Again, he says, "We never had a question with Antinomians, touching the first assurance of justification, such as is proper to the light of faith. He (Cornwall) might have spared all his arguments, to prove that we are first assured of our justification by faith, not by good works; for we grant the arguments of one sort of assurance, which is proper to faith; and they prove nothing against another sort of assurance by signs and effects, which is also divine." Further, as to the difference between these two kinds of assurance; the assurance of faith has its object and foundation without the man, but that of sense has them within him: The assurance of faith looks to Christ, the promise and covenant of God, and says, "This is all my salvation; God has spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice." But the assurance of sense looks inward at the works of God, such as the person's own graces, attainments, experiences, and the like: The assurance of faith giving an evidence to things not seen, can claim an interest in, and plead a saving relation to a hiding, withdrawing God: Zion said, "My Lord hath forgotten me;" and the spouse, "I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone." So he may be a forgetting and a withdrawing God to my feeling, and yet to my faith, my God and my Lord still, says holy Rutherford; even as the wife may believe the angry and forsaking husband, is still her husband. But, on the other hand, the assurance of sense is the evidence of things seen and felt.

\* Page 27.

† Part II. lib. ii. p. 134.



The one says, I take him for mine; the other says, I feel he is mine: The one says with the church, My God (though he cover himself with a cloud, that my prayer cannot pass through, yet) will hear me; the other, My God has heard me: The one says, He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness: the other, He has brought me forth to the light, and I do behold his righteousness: The one says, Though he should kill me, yet will I trust in him; the other, He smiles and shines on me, therefore will I love him, and trust in him.

Upon the whole, we humbly conceive, were the nature and grounds of faith's persuasion more narrowly and impartially under the guidance of the Spirit of truth, searched into, and laid open, it would, instead of discouraging weak Christians, exceedingly tend to the strengthening and increase of faith, and consequently have a mighty influence on spiritual comfort, and true gospel holiness, which will always be found to bear proportion to faith, as effects do to the efficacy and influence of their causes.

QUERY IX. *What is that act of faith, by which a sinner appropriates Christ, and his saving benefits, to himself?*

*Ans.* This question being fully and plainly answered, in what is said on the immediately foregoing, we refer thereto, and proceed to the tenth.

QUERY X. *Whether the revelation of the divine will in the word, affording a warrant to offer Christ unto all, and a warrant to all to receive him, can be said to be the Father's making a deed of gift and grant of Christ unto all mankind? Is this grant made to all mankind by sovereign grace? And whether is it absolute or conditional?*

*Ans.* Here we are directed to that part of our Representation, where we complain that the following passage is condemned, viz.: "The father hath made a deed of gift or grant unto all mankind, that whosoever of them shall believe in his Son, shall not perish;" and where we say, "That this treatment of the said passage, seems to enroach on the warrant aforesaid, and also upon sovereign grace, which hath made this grant, not to devils, but to men, in terms than which none can be imagined more extensive;"\* agreeable to what we have already said in our Representation. We answer to the first part of the question, that by the deed of gift or grant unto all mankind, we understand no more than the revelation of the divine will in the word, affording warrant to offer Christ to all, and a warrant to all to receive him: For although we believe the purchase and application of redemption to be peculiar to the elect, who were given by the Father to Christ in the counsel of peace; yet the warrant to receive him is common to all: ministers, by virtue of the commission they have received from their great Lord and Master, are authorized and instructed to go to preach the gospel to every creature, *i. e.* to make a full, free, and unhampered offer of him, his grace, righteousness, and salvation, to every rational soul, to whom they may in providence have access to speak. And though we had a voice like a trumpet, that could reach all the corners of the earth, we think we would be bound, by virtue of our commission, to lift it up and say, 'Ho you, O men, do we call, and our voice is to the sons of men. God hath so loved the world, that he



gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,' John iii. 16. And although this deed of gift and grant, "That whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish," &c., is neither in our Representation, nor in the passages of the book condemned on that head, called a deed of gift, and grant of Christ; yet being required to give our judgment on this point, we think, that agreeable to the holy scriptures it may be so called, as particularly appears from the text last cited, John iii. 16, where, by the giving of Christ, we understand not only his eternal destination by the Father, to be the Redeemer of an elect world, and his giving him unto the death for them, in the fulness of time; but more especially, a giving of him in the word, unto all, to be received and believed in: The giving here, cannot be a giving in possession, which is peculiar only unto them who actually believe, but it must be such a giving, granting, or offering, as warrants a man to believe or receive the gift; and must therefore be anterior to actual believing. This is evident enough from the text itself: He gave him, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, &c. The context also, to us, puts it beyond controversy; the brazen serpent was given, and lifted up, as a common good to the whole camp of Israel, that whosoever in all the camp, being stung by the fiery serpents, looked thereunto, might not die, but live: So here, Christ is given to a lost world, in the word, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, &c. And in this respect, we think, Christ is a common Saviour, and his salvation is a common salvation: and it is glad tidings of great joy unto all people, that unto us (not to angels that fell) this Son is given, and this Child is born, whose name is called Wonderful, &c. Isa. ix. 6.

We have a scripture also to this purpose, John vi. 32, where Christ, speaking to a promiscuous multitude, makes a comparison between himself and the manna that fell about the tents of Israel in the wilderness, and says: "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." As the simple raining of the manna about their camp, is called a giving of it, ver. 31, before it was tasted or fed upon; so the very revelation and offer of Christ is called (according to the judicious Calvin on the place) a giving of him, ere he be received and believed on.

Of his giving of Christ to mankind lost, we read also, 1 John v. 11, "And this is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." This giving in the text, is not, we conceive, a giving in possession, in greater or lesser measure; but a giving by way of grant and offer, whereupon one may warrantably take possession, and the party to whom, is not the election only, but lost mankind: For the record of God here, must be such a thing as warrants all to believe on the Son of God. But it can be no such warrant, to tell, That God hath given eternal life to the elect; for the making of a gift to a certain select company of persons, can never be a warrant for all men to receive or take possession of it. This will be farther evident, if we consider, That the great sin of unbelief lies in not believing this record of God; "he that believes not, hath made God a liar," says the apostle, ver. 10, "because he believes not the record that God gave of his Son;" and then it followeth, ver. 11, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life," &c. Now, are we to think, that the rejecting of the record of God is a bare disbelieving of this proposition, "That God hath



given eternal life unto the elect?" No surely; for the most desperate unbelievers, such as Judas, and others, believe this; and their belief of it adds to their anguish and torment: Or, do they, by believing this, set to their seal that God is true? No, they still continue, notwithstanding of all this, to make him a liar, in not believing this record of God, That to lost mankind, and to themselves in particular, God hath given eternal life, by way of grant, so as they, as well as others, are warranted and welcome; and every one to whom it comes, on their peril, required, by faith to receive, or take possession of it. By not receiving this gifted and offered remedy, with application and appropriation, they fly in the face of God's record and testimony; and therefore do justly and deservedly perish, seeing the righteousness, salvation, and kingdom of God, was brought so near to them, in the free offer of the gospel, and yet they would not take it. The great pinch and strait, we think, of an awakened conscience, does not lie in believing, that God hath given eternal life to the elect; but in believing or receiving Christ, offered to us in the gospel, with particular application to the man himself, in scripture called, "An eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of man." And yet, till this difficulty be surmounted, in greater or lesser measure, he can never be said to believe in Christ, or receive and rest upon him for salvation; the very taking or receiving must needs pre-suppose a giving of Christ; and this giving may be, and is for the most part, where there is no receiving; but there can be no receiving of Christ for salvation, where there is not revelation of Christ in the word of the gospel, affording warrant to receive him, Rom. x. 14, and then, by the effectual operation of the Spirit, persuading and enabling the sinner to embrace him upon this warrant and offer: "A man," says the Spirit of God, John iii. 27, "can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." Hence, Mr. Rutherford, in his *Christ Dying and Drawing*, &c., page 442, says, "That reprobates have as fair a warrant to believe as the elect have."

As to the second part of this question, to wit: "Is this grant made to all mankind by sovereign grace? And whether is it absolute or conditional?" We answer, That this grant made in common to lost mankind, is from sovereign grace only; and it being ministers' warrant to offer Christ unto all, and people's warrant to receive him, it cannot fail to be absolutely free; yet, so as none can be possessed of Christ and his benefits, till by faith they receive him.

QUERY XI. *Is the division of the law, as explained and applied in the Marrow, to be justified, and which cannot be rejected without burying several gospel-truths.*

*Ans.* We humbly judge, the tripartite division of the law, if rightly understood, may be admitted as orthodox; yet, seeing that which we are concerned with, as contained in our Representation, is only the division of the law into the law of works and the law of Christ: we say, That we are still of opinion, that this distinction of the law is carefully to be maintained; in regard that by the law of works, we, according to the scripture, understand the covenant of works, which believers are wholly and altogether delivered from, although they are certainly under the law of the ten commands in the hand of a Mediator: And if this distinction of the law, thus applied, be overthrown and declared groundless, several sweet gospel-truths must un-



avoidably fall in the ruins of it. For instance, if there be no difference put between the law as a covenant, and the law as a rule of life to believers in the hand of Christ ; it must needs follow, That the law still retains its covenant-form with respect to believers, and that they are still under the law in this formality, contrary to scripture ; Rom. vi. 14, and vii. 1, 2, 3 ; and to the Confession of Faith, chap. 19, § 6. It would also follow, that the sins of believers are still to be looked upon as breaches of the covenant of works ; and consequently, that their sins not only deserve the wrath and curse of God (which is a most certain truth,) but also makes them actually liable to the wrath of God, and the pains of hell for ever ; which is true only of them that are in a state of black nature, Lesser Catechism, Quest. 19 ; and contrary to Confession of Faith, chap. 19, § 1. It will likewise follow, That believers are still to eye God as a vindictive and wrathful Judge, though his justice be fully satisfied in the death and blood of their blessed Surety, apprehended by faith. These, and many other sweet gospel-truths, we think fall, in the ruins of the foresaid distinction condemned as groundless.

*QUERY XII. Is the hope of heaven and fear of hell to be excluded from the motives of the believer's obedience? And if not, how can the Marrow be defended, that expressly excludes them, though it should allow of other motives?*

*Ans.* Here we are referred to the third particular head, wherein we think the Marrow injured by the Assembly's act, which for brevity's sake we do not transcribe : But, agreeable both to our Representation and the scope of the Marrow, we answer, That, taking heaven for a state of endless felicity, in the enjoyment of God in Christ, we are so far from thinking, that this is to be excluded from being a motive of the believer's obedience, that we think it the chief end of man, next to the glory of God, Psal. lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" &c. Heaven, instead of being a reward to the believer, would be a desolate wilderness to him, without the enjoyment of a God in Christ ; the Lord God and the Lamb are the light of that place ; God himself is the portion of his people ; he is their shield, and exceeding great reward. The very cope-stone of the happiness of heaven lies in being for ever with the Lord, and in beholding of his glory : and this indeed the believer is to have in his eye, as the recompense of reward, and a noble motive of obedience : But, to form conceptions of heaven, as a place of pleasure and happiness, without the former views of it, and to fancy that this heaven is to be obtained by our own works and doings, is unworthy of a believer, a child of God, in regard it is slavish, legal, mercenary, and carnal.

As for the fear of hell its being a motive of the believer's obedience, we reckon it one of the special branches of that glorious liberty wherewith Christ hath made his people free, that they yield obedience to the Lord, not out of slavish fear of hell and wrath, but out of a child-like love and willing mind ; Confess. chap. 20, § 6. "Christ hath delivered us out of the hands of our enemies, that we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our lives," Luke i. 74, 75. A filial fear of God, and of his fatherly displeasure, is worthy of the believer, being a fruit of faith, and of the Spirit of adoption ; but a slavish fear of hell and wrath, from which he is delivered by Christ, is not a fruit of faith, but of unbelief. And in so far as a believer is not drawn with love, but driven on in his obedience with a slavish fear of hell, we think him in so far under a spirit of bondage. And judging this to



be the Marrow's sense of rewards and punishments with respect to a believer, we think it may and ought to be defended.

And this doctrine, which we apprehend to be the truth, stands supported, not only by scripture and our Confession of Faith, but also by the suffrages of some of our soundest divines : For instance, Mr. Rutherford ; \* "Believers," says he, "are to be sad for their sins, as offensive to the authority of the Lawgiver and the love of Christ, though they be not to fear the eternal punishment of them ;" for sorrow for sin, and fear for sin, are most different to us. Again, says the same author, † "servile obedience, under apprehension of legal terror, was never commanded in the spiritual law of God to the Jews, more than to us." Durham (*loco citato*,) "The believer," says he, "being free from the law as a covenant, his life depends not on the promises annexed to the law, nor is he in danger by threatening adjoined to it, both these to believers being made void through Christ." And to conclude, We are clear of Dr. Owen's mind, anent the use of the threatenings of everlasting wrath with reference unto believers, who, though he owns them to be declarative of God's hatred of sin, and his will to punish it ; yet, in regard the execution of them is inconsistent with the covenant, and God's faithfulness therein, says, "The use of them cannot be to beget in believers an anxious, doubting, solicitous fear about the punishment threatened, grounded on a supposition that the person fearing shall be overtaken with it, or a perplexing fear of hell-fire ; which, though it oft-times be a consequence of some of God's dispensations towards us, of our own sins, or the weakness of our faith, is not anywhere prescribed unto us as a duty ; nor is the ingenerating of it in us the design of any of the threatenings of God." His reasons, together with the nature of that fear which the threatenings of eternal wrath ought to beget in believers, may be viewed among the rest of the authorities.

These are some thoughts that have offered to us upon the queries, which we lay before the Reverend Commission, with all becoming deference, humbly craving that charity, which thinketh no evil, may procure a favourable construing of our words, so as no sense may be put upon, nor inference drawn from them, which we never intended. And in regard the tenor of our doctrine, and our aims in conversation, have (though with a mixture of much sinful weakness) been sincerely pointed at the honor of the Lord Jesus, as our King, as well as Priest, as our sanctification as well as our righteousness,—We cannot but regret our being aspersed, as *turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness*, and casting off the obligation of the holy law of the ten commands ; being persuaded that the damnation of such as either do or teach so, is just and unavoidable, if mercy prevent it not. But now, if, after this plain and ingenuous declaration of our principles, we must still lie under the same load of reproach, it is our comfort that we have the testimony of our consciences clearing us in that matter, and doubt not that the Lord will in due time "bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noonday." We only add, That we adhere to our Representation and Petition in all points ; and so much the rather, that we have

\* Christ dying and drawing, &c., page 513.

† Trial and triumph, old edit., page 107.



already observed the sad fruits and bad improvement made of the Assembly's deed, therein complained of.

These answers, contained in this and the sixteen preceding pages, (viz. of the manuscript given in,) are subscribed at Edinburgh, March 12, 1722, by us.

The names of the SUBSCRIBERS, both of the Papers given in Nov. 9th, 1721, and of the preceding Answers.

Mr. James Hog, minister of the Gospel at		Carnock.
Thomas Boston,	do.	Etterick.
John Williamson,	do.	Inveresk.
James Kid,	do.	Queensferry.
Gabriel Wilson,	do.	Maxton.
Ebenezer Erskine,	do.	Portmoak.
Ralph Erskine, }		
James Wardlaw, }	do.	Dunferline.
Henry Davidson,	do.	Galashiels.
James Bathgate,	do.	Orwell.
William Hunter,	do.	Lilliesleaf.

N. B. Mr. John Bonar, Minister of the Gospel at Torphichen, being detained by indisposition, could neither attend when the Queries were given, nor the Answers returned.

With regard to these answers, it may be remarked that they contain a vast amount of sound theology, and display an amount of theological learning rarely found in the works of either ancient or modern divines. Had Ebenezer Erskine and William Wilson done nothing else, their answers to these unreasonable questions, propounded by the commission, would have perpetuated their names as long as the English language is spoken, and pious men are pleased with sound, scriptural theology.

The body of the ministers of the Church of Scotland, at that time, seem to have been ignorant of the gospel plan of salvation; at least of that plan as deduced from the Scriptures and briefly but plainly stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith. The *anti-Marrow* men, and they were in the majority, seem to have been unable to make the proper distinction between the law as being a rule of life and not being a rule of justification. The true doctrine of both the Westminster Confession of Faith and of the *Marrow* men is, that the sinner is not justified on account of obedience to the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, the ground of the sinner's pardon and justification, is the obedience and suffering of the Lamb of God. The death of Christ secures the believer's pardon, and the righteousness of Jesus imputed to him and received by



faith alone—faith without works—is that on account of which he is pronounced just. Such being the case, while the law is a rule of sanctification, it is not, and never was designed—at least since the fall of Adam—to be a rule of justification.

The Assembly of 1722 somewhat modified the act, condemning, in no measured terms, the “*Marrow of Modern Divinity* ;” but still its most objectionable features were permitted to remain in force. Not only so; but the Assembly decided that the Representatives or *Marrow* men should be publicly rebuked at their bar.

The Representatives appeared before the bar of the Assembly, and were, by the Moderator, rebuked. Having discovered how the matter was likely to terminate, they had previously prepared a protest. So soon as the Moderator had finished his rebuke, this protest was presented by James Kidd, in his own name, and in the name of the other *Marrow* men. The Assembly flew into a rage, and would neither permit the protest to be read nor allow it to lie on the table.

The Assembly was quickly dissolved, as if the object was to insult the *Marrow* men. Here the matter ended. The parties had now grown warm; nay, they had become bitterly angry. The *anti-Marrow* men, constituting themselves inquisitors, set about to hunt up the *Marrow* men and drag them before the church courts, as if the object of the latter was to establish Popery. The controversy spread all over Scotland, and the book was eagerly sought for by both ministers and people—the former generally to condemn; the latter to approve. Ministers who had never seen the book, preached against it and pronounced anathemas against any of their parishioners who would dare to read it. This excited the curiosity of the people, who made it, on all occasions, a subject of conversation. The multitude of the people, who, when the controversy first began, had never seen or heard of the book, were as much puzzled to know what was its proper name, as to learn what were its real contents. Some argued that the title of the book was the “*Marrow of Morality*,” whilst others declared that its proper title was the “*Mother of Divinity*.”

So soon as the mass of pious people became acquainted with its contents, from a personal examination, the popular current turned in favor of the *Marrow* men. The *anti-Marrow* men,



especially the young men, ceased to preach Christ and Him Crucified, and turned their pulpit exercises into rant condemnatory of Edward Fisher's book. The result was that the congregations of the *Marrow* men increased, whilst those of the opposite party dwindled down.



## CHAPTER III.

The effect of the "Marrow" Controversy on the Church—Professor Simson Denies the necessary Existence of Jesus Christ—Is Tried by the Presbytery of Glasgow—His case is Brought before the General Assembly—Charges all Proved—The Church greatly Corrupted—Blasphemous Doctrines—Professor Simson's Case Ended, 1729—Many were Grieved on account of the Leniency Shown him by the Assembly—The "Marrow" Men Protest—Effect Nothing—Patronage—Its Origin—Presbyterian Mode of Settling Vacant Congregations—The Manner previous to the Secession—Patronage Law Revived by Charles II.—Abolished in 1688—Restored in 1711—Clergy in favor of the Patronage Act—The Assembly Appoints "Riding Committees" to Settle Pastors—The "Riding Committees" Call out the Military to Assist Them—The Overture of 1731 Designed to Crush out the Rights of the People—The Overture Rejected by the Presbyteries, but Adopted by the General Assembly—Character of the General Assembly—The Overture the proximate Cause of the Secession—Robert Stark forcibly Placed over the Congregation of Kinross—Ebenezer Erskine's Sermon—Adam Ferguson Moved the Appointing of a Committee to Consider the Sermon—Objection Stated by the Committee—Sermon Published—The objectional Passages Scriptural—Mr. Erskine Defends Himself—The Kingship of Christ Offensive to the Majority—Mr. Erskine's Definition of a Call—Adheres to his Notes—Mr. Erskine censured by the Synod of Perth and Sterling—Twelve Ministers and two Elders Protest—Mr. Erskine is Ordered to be Rebuked in April—He Refuses to be Rebuked and Presents a Paper—General Assembly Met in May, 1733—Mr. Erskine's Protest Brought before the Assembly—The Assembly Order Mr. Erskine to be Rebuked—He Declared he could not Submit—Protests of Wilson, Moncrieff and Fisher—Assembly Refused to Hear the Protest Read—Protest fell on the Floor—Is read by Nae-smith—Excitement in the Assembly—Protesters Sent for—Act of 1732—Protesters Brought before the Assembly—Ordered before the Commission in August—The Protesters Appear before the Commission—Are not Permitted to Defend Themselves—Division in the Commission—Protesters Suspended—Intense Interest Felt throughout Scotland—Petitions Sent to the Commission—Commission Meet in November, 1733—Higher Censure Inflicted by the Commission upon the Protesters—The Protesters Received the Sympathy of Many in the Church—They did not Succeed, but were violently Thrust out—Meet at Gairney Bridge and Organize the Associate Presbytery.

From the adjournment of the Assembly of 1722 to the meeting of the Assembly of 1726, the church was in a ferment about the acts passed concerning the "Marrow of Modern Divinity."



During all this time Professor Simson was busily engaged in teaching doctrines subversive not only of the Westminster Confession of Faith, but also diametrically opposed to the whole Christian system. He continued to teach his former errors, and added one even more dangerous. This last error was the denying the necessary existence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching that the three persons of the Trinity are not numerically one in substance or essence. In plain language, Professor Simson taught, in his theological lectures, that Jesus Christ is not divine—not God equal with the Father.

The Glasgow Professor was again brought before the Assembly, but not until his case had been somewhat examined into by the Presbytery of Glasgow. The case was begun by the Assembly of 1726, and ended by the Assembly of 1729. All the charges made against the Professor were substantiated. In fact, after the crafty Professor had exhausted all his cunning, he made an avowal of his belief, which was in accordance with the standards of the church, but he at the same time acknowledged that he had been teaching the heterodox doctrines of which he had been charged. His first attempt was to confuse the Assembly with his metaphysical statements and explanations. Finding he could not succeed in this, his next course was to recant and thereby save his salary, if he could not retain his position.

That the rise of the Secession or Associate Presbytery may be understood, it is necessary to mention the fact that old and dangerous errors had at this time been exhumed from the tomb in which they had lain forgotten for a long period. These errors were, in a number of ways, assiduously disseminated throughout Christendom. From a multitude of circumstances, it would seem that doctrines subversive of the Westminster Confession of Faith had been taught in the Divinity Hall of the University of Glasgow, before the days of John Simson. A spirit of restlessness seems to have seized not a few of the prominent ministers of the gospel in England, and Ireland and Scotland. These men, through the pride of their own hearts and the temptations of the Wicked One, set about in earnest, but cautiously and adroitly, to tear down the fair fabric of the whole Christian system. Samuel Clark, William Whiston and Benjamin Hoardly boldly gave utterance to doctrines which



were justly regarded by all pious persons as bordering on blasphemy. The Presbyterian churches in England, in Switzerland and in Ireland were disturbed by ministers who had adopted these startling but not new doctrines.

All these errorists were leagued together. Prominent among those who sowed the seeds of putrefaction in the church was the "Belfast Society" in Ireland. The leaders in this society were John Abernethy and James Kirkpatrick. These men had been fellow-students with Professor Simson in the Divinity Hall in Glasgow, and ever since had been in regular correspondence with him. They were men of decided mental powers and had made no mean attainments in literature. John Abernethy was no ordinary man, and exercised a decided influence over all the young ministers with whom he came in contact. Like Professor Simson, he was an avowed Arian; that is, he denied the divinity of Jesus Christ.

In 1729 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland brought the second trial of Professor Simson to a conclusion, but not to the honor of that ecclesiastical court. The sin of Professor Simson and the punishment inflicted upon him by the Assembly bore no adequate proportion to each other. He should have been deposed from the gospel ministry. He was only suspended, and it was further added that it was not proper nor safe that Mr. Simson be longer employed in teaching divinity. This being done, it was evident, that for the sake of peace the whole matter should be allowed to rest.

Except Thomas Boston, none of the *Marrow* men were members of the Assembly of 1729. He prepared a protest against the decision of the Assembly, but was persuaded to waive his right to have the paper incorporated in the minute. A number of the *Marrow* men were present, but only as spectators. Gabriel Wilson and Mr. Moncrieff, of Culfargie, having obtained permission to address the Assembly, expressed in strong and decided terms, their dissatisfaction with the decision of the Assembly. The two Erskines and James Hog and some others privately expressed their determination to adhere to the protest offered by the venerable Boston.

It was now manifest to the people and to a number of godly ministers that the Church of Scotland had departed from her doctrinal standards. Her highest court did not hesitate to



censure those who maintained the doctrines of the Confession of Faith, and at the same time to sustain those who set themselves in hostile array against that Confession of Faith.

One of the features of all the controversies that took place in the Church of Scotland, during the twenty years that preceded the Secession, was that they had a direct tendency to drive from the National Church the staunch advocates for the doctrines taught in the Westminster Confession of Faith. If the doctrines taught in that formula are correct, then those who afterwards seceded from the Church of Scotland were orthodox; otherwise, they were not.

There was, in addition to the two causes already mentioned, one other, which led to the organization of the Associate Presbytery. This was the system of patronage which existed in the Church of Scotland at that time.

As many do not have a clear and distinct knowledge of what is meant by "patronage," it will be necessary to give a brief history of its origin and practical workings. This is the more necessary since the enforcement of the custom (which amounted to a law) of patronage was, more than anything else, the apparent and proximate cause of the Secession.

The patronage law had reference to the mode of settling a minister in a vacant congregation. In strict Presbyterian congregations the process is very simple, and we may add, strictly democratic. When, in the providence of God, a congregation becomes destitute of a pastor, the first thing that is done, when the fact becomes officially known to the Presbytery within whose bounds the congregation is situated, is, the Presbytery appoints some one of its members to visit the congregation, preach to them and declare the congregation vacant. Whenever the congregation desire to secure the services of a pastor, they make the fact known to the presbytery, and a member of the presbytery is appointed to moderate a call. In other words, some member of the presbytery, under whose inspection the members of the congregation have voluntarily placed themselves, is appointed to act as chairman of a public meeting of the congregation, at which a call is made out for some individual to take the pastoral care of the congregation. At this meeting of the congregation, or usually at a previous meeting, a pastor is chosen by ballot.



It is manifest that this process secures to the people the right to choose the pastor whom they may desire. Neither the deacons nor the elders, nor the presbytery nor the synod, nor the General Assembly nor all these combined, can place a pastor over a congregation contrary to the will of the majority, or even a respectable minority of the members of the congregation. This is one feature of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. It is a grand feature. It gives the people the privilege of enjoying that precious gospel privilege of having pastors according to their choice.

Such was not the case in the Church of Scotland previous to the days of the secession. Such a thing never had existed in the Church of Scotland, not even during the period which elapsed between 1638 and 1650, her palmiest days.

It is true, that in the First Book of Discipline, prepared mainly by John Knox, the lawful vocation of a pastor was vested in the people, but it seems never to have been put into practical operation; for in the Second Book of Discipline the choice of a pastor was vested in the eldership, only granting the people the right to acquiesce or dissent. In 1649, shortly after the adoption of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland framed and published along with its minutes a Directory for the choice of a pastor. In this Directory it is provided that "the session of the congregation shall meet and proceed to the election" of a pastor.

It matters, practically, very little what were the instructions given in either the First or the Second Book of Discipline, for the law of patronages and presentations enacted by the Parliament was not repealed until 1649.

The Directory of 1649 continued in full force; that is, the sessions of vacant congregations continued to meet and choose the pastors for such congregations until 1660. In that year Charles II. again revived the law of patronage, and all the ministers who had been settled as pastors over congregations since 1649, were required by law to accept a presentation from the legal patron, or be thrust out.

After the Restoration, in 1690, patronages and presentations were partially, and only partially, abolished. In appearance, an advance was made towards genuine Presbyterianism; but it was only in appearance. The people were still deprived of



the privilege of choosing their pastors. This privilege was vested in the sessions and the Protestant land owners, if the congregation was in the country, and in the magistrates, town council and sessions, if the congregation was in a town.

It requires only a limited knowledge of human nature to be able to discern that such a regulation made the way to violent abuses open and easy. It placed the many at the mercy of the few. In order that this may be understood, it is only necessary to know the origin of the right of patronage and the powers which it conferred upon a patron.

The right of patronage was the power to present some one to a vacant congregation as a proper person to be its pastor and receive the benefice. It was clearly a relic of the dark days of Popery. This right of patronage was originally acquired in a variety of ways. Sometimes an individual gave a lot on which to erect a church, with the reserved right that the choice of a pastor for that church or congregation should be vested in him and his heirs forever. This was liable to great abuse. The donor of the church site might be a good and pious man; but his heirs might neither fear God nor regard man, and place over the congregation a pastor likeminded with themselves. The right to select the patron for a particular congregation was often bestowed by a bishop, and frequently sold by a bishop to some one. The more common mode of obtaining this right was by a direct gift from the Pope of Rome.

This right of patronage was, to all intents, real property. It could be disposed of by will; it could be sold, or it could be given away. It is most evident that it deprived the people of those rights which God as a God of creation bestows upon all men, and as a God of grace bestows upon all believers. Such a system was calculated either to crush out the spirit of freedom or incite rebellion. It was never acceptable to the Scotch people after the days of the First Reformation, and vigorous but unsuccessful efforts were frequently made to abolish the system.

In 1711, the act of 1690, which partially abolished patronage, was rescinded, and the unrighteous system again foisted upon the people. For some time it was attended with little evil consequences. The reason of this was the fact that it was generally regarded by the masses as disreputable for a minister



to settle in a congregation as pastor without a regular call from the people. The patrons, too, were at first prudent and reserved in exercising their legal rights. For a number of years, after 1711, patrons generally tacitly allowed the people of vacant congregations to choose their own pastors; or where the people of vacant congregations neglected to exercise this divine right, the Presbytery was allowed to settle a pastor over the congregation in accordance with what they called the *Jus Devolutum*. By the *Jus Devolutum* was meant an unpresbyterial provision which obtained at that time in the Church of Scotland. It was provided that should neither the session, magistrates, town council nor patron, settle a pastor over a vacant congregation within six months after it became vacant, then the right devolved upon the Presbytery. This was the *Jus Devolutum*. It was a species of monarchy. The people were forced to have a pastor, but not permitted to select that pastor. Some one must do that for them.

It was not long until a number of ministers ceased to regard the public odium which attached to accepting a presentation. The church now became divided and bitter and opposing feelings were aroused. The mass of the laity were opposed to the patronage law, both in theory and practice. The clergy were divided. No doubt this division of the clergy, on the law of patronage and presentation, was due, in part, to the fact that in the reorganization of the National Church of Scotland, in 1690, policy rather than principle predominated.

The people began to appeal from the decisions of presbyteries and synods to the General Assembly. The popular clamor was loud that the divine right of election might be restored to the members of vacant congregations. The General Assembly was cramped. Such was the general and deep-seated corruption of the clergy respecting the rights of the people, that a majority of every Assembly were thoroughly in favor of the rigid enforcement of the law of patronage. Still, there was ever a minority in each Assembly who fearlessly and boldly advocated the cause of the people. Under the circumstances, the General Assembly, had it been unanimous, could not have rendered any relief to those who appealed to it for assistance. The law required that pastors for vacant congregations should be chosen by the elders and landholders.



Unfortunately there was a very strong party who were in favor of placing the whole business of supplying pastors for vacant churches in the hands of the patrons of these congregations. All that the Assembly did was to appoint committees to do the work which constitutionally belonged to the presbytery. It frequently occurred that a presbytery would not consent to install a minister over a congregation against the will of the people. To meet such emergencies, a committee was appointed by the General Assembly whose duty was to ride around the country and install pastors in refractory congregations. The law was imperative, and whenever patron and presentee insisted upon their rights, this "riding committee," as it was rightly called, would perpetrate the awful—we dare not say farcical sin—of making a man the pastor of a people who would not hear him preach. Things soon became alarming. It was no very uncommon thing for the people to threaten resistance. When this was the case, resort was had to arms by the patronage party. The military was called out, and with drums and fifes, and with all the pomp and pageantry of war, the party advanced through town and country to the church. The roadsides were lined with idle spectators, and with grieved, outraged and insulted Christians. The desire of the patron and presentee was accomplished. The latter was made, by force of arms, pastor of a people who did not desire him, and who never could love him, and never would be instructed by him.

It is manifest to any reflecting mind that such a state of things could not exist long among a people not already reduced to the condition of abject and hopeless slavery. The crisis was fast approaching when reformation, rebellion or secession was inevitable. There is no way of concealing the fact that the acts of the prevailing party in the Church of Scotland tended, and that directly, to the establishment of a system of the most unexampled tyranny.

In 1731 an overture was brought before the Assembly for the purpose of crushing out of the church the doctrine of the divine right of a congregation to choose their own pastor, and also for the purpose of silencing forever those who dared to advocate this doctrine. The avowed object of this overture was to establish a uniform mode of settling vacant churches.



This was certainly desirable, provided it was proposed to act uniformly right. This it was not, however, proposed to do. By this overture it was proposed to deprive the people in every section of the land of all religious liberty. The object designed by the dominant party was that the civil law of the land respecting the settlement of vacant churches should be rigidly enforced, and that henceforth no reasons of dissent against the determination of church judicatories should be entered on the record. This overture was sent down to the presbyteries, but it was provided that in the meantime it should be regarded the law of the church. In 1732, forty-nine presbyteries, through their commissioners, sent up reports. Thirty-one presbyteries were opposed to the overture; twelve required it to be materially amended before becoming a law. Only six presbyteries were willing that it be, without change, passed into a law. No report was received from eighteen presbyteries. More than one half of the presbyteries heard from were opposed to the overture as it had been sent to them. Such being the case, the overture was, according to Presbyterian usage, no longer before the Assembly. Strange to say, the Assembly added the eighteen presbyteries not heard from to the eighteen which were either in favor of the overture as it stood, or as amended, and decided that the majority of the church was in favor of the overture. This was a gratuitous conclusion. The Assembly did not know officially, and consequently did not know at all, how the eighteen presbyteries, which had not reported, would vote on the overture.

Tyrants are not over-scrupulous. The majority in the Assembly desired the overture passed into a law, and they determined that a law it should be, no matter what the presbyteries or people might think or say to the contrary. So far as the Assembly was able to judge by the Presbyterian reports, a decided majority was opposed to the overture, and to the mass of the people of Scotland, it was very obnoxious. It appears that unfair and unrighteous means were constantly resorted to in the selection of the members to the General Assembly. It rarely was the case, from the Revolution to the time of which we are speaking, and for a number of years after, that the General Assembly was a fair exponent of the sentiments of the people. The people were constantly, and in great numbers, petitioning



for redress of grievances. Ministers and elders from all sections of the country were accustomed to send up complaints to, perhaps, every Assembly. The dominant party in the Church of Scotland expected, by this overture, to silence forever all complaints. It was a modest, but most effectual way of declaring that the General Assembly was infallible. It had a direct tendency to ignore the presbyteries and crush the people.

As this overture was the immediate cause of the Secession, it will be necessary that we be minute in our details. Against the action of the Assembly in adopting the overture, a number of ministers, of whom Ebenezer Erskine was the acknowledged leader, protested. At the same meeting, a petition signed by forty-two ministers and three elders, begging the Assembly not to adopt the overture, was handed in. No less than seventeen hundred people sent up a petition, in which they earnestly sought redress of grievances. The protest of Ebenezer Erskine was not allowed to be read, and the petition of the forty-two ministers and three elders, as well as the complaint of the seventeen hundred people, was treated with the most profound contempt. A feeling of indignation and alarm spread all over Scotland. The people generally were indignant because the General Assembly, in not noticing their complaints, had added insult to injury, and the orthodox ministers and the people as a whole were alarmed, lest the Assembly, which now claimed infallibility, would advance one more step and take away all the landmarks of the Reformation. Ebenezer Erskine published his protest in the form of a pamphlet entitled "Defections of the Church of Scotland from her Reformation Principles." Fifteen of the forty-two ministers also protested against the treatment they had received from the Assembly. The people, no longer able to make themselves heard by the Church, appealed to the civil officers of the land, and "took instruments at the hand of a notary."

Great excitement now prevailed throughout the whole country, and the action of the commission had no tendency whatever to allay it. The congregation of Kinross was, at this time (1732), vacant. The people had invited Francis Craig to become their pastor, but the presentation had been given to Robert Stark. The congregation was under the care of the Presbytery of Dunfermline. Since the people all desired Craig,



and none of them Stark, the presbytery refused to ordain and install Stark. The commission, in the exercise of its unlimited and arbitrary powers, forthwith appointed a committee to proceed at once to Kinross and settle Stark over the congregation, in spite of both the people and the Presbytery. The people and the Presbytery separately complained to the commission, that in the settlement of Stark, the constitutional law and order of the church had been trampled under foot, and that the heaven-bequeathed rights of the people had been ignored. Their petitions and complaints only served to excite vengeance in the bosom of the commission. The Presbytery was ordered, in imperious tones, to put the name of Stark upon its roll. No protests were allowed. The power of the Commission was unlimited, and regarding itself infallible, it quickly determined that its mandates, whether right or wrong, should be most scrupulously obeyed. The matter was taken to the Assembly of 1733, but the highest judiciary of the church not only confirmed the action of the commission, but ordered that the Presbytery of Dunfermline must respect the intruder Stark as a copresbyter. The commission was charged to keep a close watch over the Presbytery, and see that this last instruction of the Assembly was rigidly obeyed to the letter. If the Presbytery was found to be disobedient, its members were to be subjected to the highest censure of the church—excommunication. In all this we can see a spirit of tyranny rarely equalled and never surpassed. The reasoning of the dominant party in the Church of Scotland was such as is used only by those who lord over the heritage of God. The constitutional party had but one privilege left—the right to testify from the pulpit against these tyrannical and oppressive measures. This privilege, it was determined by the dominant party, should be taken from them. Things were rushing, as if driven by a tornado, to that state when silent acquiescence in all the acts of the General Assembly and its commission would be made a term of ministerial and Christian communion. To all human appearance, the time was not far distant when a petition to the General Assembly for a redress of grievances, or a complaint on account of injury, would be followed by excommunication from the pale of the church. This is what the dominant party, most of all things, desired.



Ever since 1690, the Church of Scotland had been only nominally a unit. In reality, it had been greatly divided. The anti-Presbyterian party had gained the ascendancy in the church courts; but it had acquired its power not honestly, but by a system of ecclesiastical fraud and political scheming. There were in the church a number of able ministers who stood up manfully for the constitution of the church and the Word of God. Prominent among these, after the death of Thomas Boston, was Ebenezer Erskine, a man of deep-toned piety, extensive theological attainments, and one of the most eloquent and instructive preachers of his day. In fact, Ebenezer Erskine and his brother Ralph have, as evangelical ministers, had few equals and fewer superiors. The dominant party in the church had no love for Ebenezer Erskine. In fact, they hated him. He stood like an adamant wall in the path of their innovations.

The dominant party were attempting to rob Jesus Christ of His kingly office, and the servants of Christ of their sacred privileges. On the 4th of June, 1732, soon after the adjournment of the General Assembly, Mr. Erskine exposed, in a sermon of commanding power, the unconstitutional acts of the Assembly. This sermon was based upon Isaiah, ix. 6: "The government shall be upon his shoulder." On the 10th of October following, the Synod of Perth and Stirling met at Perth. Mr. Erskine was the retiring moderator. His opening sermon was preached from Psalm cxviii. 22. "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner." In this sermon it is shown that David was opposed by Saul; that Jesus Christ was opposed by the Jewish priest and rulers, and that the blood-bought church of God had its bitter enemies and rejectors in Scotland. The Synod was no sooner constituted and a new moderator elected, than Mr. Adam Ferguson moved that a committee be appointed to consider the statements made in Mr. Erskine's sermon. The motion was favored by Mr. James Mercer, Mr. James Mackie and the Laird of Glendoig. This motion called out a long discussion, but the Synod finally agreed to appoint a committee whose business should be to collect the objectionable passages in the sermon and present them at the next session of the Synod. The committee before presenting their report to the Synod, appointed four of their num-



ber to hold a conference with Mr. Erskine for the purpose of persuading him to retract the objectionable parts of his sermon, and to promise that in the future he would refrain from giving utterance to similar opinions. This sub-committee met with Mr. Erskine and stated their demands, to which Mr. Erskine replied that he had uttered nothing in his sermon which his conscience would allow him to retract. On the next day, the committee, according to instructions, reported to the Synod. In this report, they presented a number of objectionable passages collected from memory, from the sermon of Mr. Erskine.

As this sermon was the proximate cause which led, about a year afterward, to the formation of the Associate or Secession Presbytery, it will be necessary to give the matter a careful and candid investigation. The sermon was preached on the 10th of October, 1782, and was published shortly afterward. It will be found in the first volume of Mr. Erskine's collected sermons, and is to-day regarded by the mass of God's people, of all denominations, as strictly orthodox. It is, as any reader may discover, what is called a textual sermon. The truths taught or suggested by the text are clearly and fully brought out. It would not be saying too much to say that this sermon, like the rest of Mr. Erskine's sermons, is in itself a complete body of divinity. By it the mind of the true child of God is enlightened and his heart warmed.

The committee to whom was referred this sermon reported eight objectionable passages, upon which they founded four charges. Every one of the objectionable passages, unfortunately for the committee, are clearly in accordance with the express and positive teachings of the Scriptures. These passages being quoted by the committee, from memory, are not verbally the same as those contained in the sermon itself; still, they are, in the main, correct. One of the passages was, that Mr. Erskine, in speaking of the corruptions of the Jewish priests, said he "left it to the consciences of every one to judge what of these corruptions were to be found among ourselves at this day." Another passage was that it was said in the sermon that "mistaken notions of the kingdom of Jesus Christ was the ground of many things which were wrong amongst us at this day." "The Jewish teachers," he said, "being connected with the great, trampled upon the people as an unhal-



lowed mob." "That it was a great crime to intrude in the office of a minister an individual who did not have a call. That to be a minister two things are necessary—the call of God and the call of the church. That every family and every society has a natural right to select servants for themselves. The church is the freest society on earth; therefore the church has the right to choose its own ministers." In speaking of the encroachments which the Church of Scotland had made upon the kingly office of Jesus Christ, Mr. Erskine said that the Saviour "was deeply wounded by the Assembly of 1732, by lodging the power of choosing pastors for vacant congregations in the hands of heritors (land-owners) and elders, to the exclusion of the people."

We leave it to the decision of every Bible reader if every one of these passages are not in strict accordance with the word of God and the history of the times. Every sentiment they contain may be appropriately uttered, at any time, by any minister of the New Testament. The committee based upon these passages the following charges against Mr. Erskine:

1. "That the strain of a great part of the sermon appears to compare the ministers of this church with the most corrupt teachers under the Old Testament."

2. "He refuses that any minister had God's call, who had only a call from the heritors, or any other set of men; by which he excludes the whole ministers of the Church of Scotland, and himself among them, from having the call of God, the body of Christians having never been allowed to vote in the election of a minister.

3. "He charges our forefathers with a sinful silence or negligence.

4. "That he spoke disrespectfully of the act of the Assembly lodging the power of election in heritors and elders."

It is manifest that these charges were brought against Mr. Erskine because the Bible truths which he preached were unpalatable to some of the committee, and the sins and corruptions and innovations which he exposed, were iniquities with which they covered themselves as with a garment. James Mercer was a "hot, violent man, a plague on the Presbytery of Perth, and most active always in a bad cause." James Mackie was a man "smooth and subtile, but his hand was ever deep in the course of defection." The Laird of Glendoig was "a follower of the fashions of this world." These, with several others of the same school, set themselves against Mr. Erskine because the Bible truths which he preached were unpalatable to them.



After the committee had, in due form, presented their report to the Synod and made such remarks concerning it as they saw fit, Mr. Erskine asked that he might be favored with a copy of it, as he designed preparing a written defence of himself. This reasonable request was positively denied him, and it was with great difficulty that he obtained permission to see the report. It is characteristic of tyrants to be unreasonable, arbitrary and cruel. What could be more unreasonable, more arbitrary and more cruel than to refuse to give Mr. Erskine a copy of the charges which were brought against him? Such a course deprived him of his natural liberty and of his ecclesiastical rights. The end designed to be accomplished was to crush him, and with him to crush all who were like-minded with himself.

Mr. Erskine was not to be awed into silence. When the report of the committee came before the Synod for consideration, Mr. Erskine read an answer to all the charges. In this paper he showed that the first charge was not justified by anything that he had said in his sermon. That there are corrupt ministers in the Church of Scotland he boldly maintained; but there are a great number of ministers in the same Church who are not corrupt. The fallacy, or rather malice of the committee consisted in charging Mr. Erskine with saying that *all* the ministers of the Church of Scotland were corrupt, when he only intimated that some were corrupt. The first charge was founded on the following passages in the sermon: "I leave it to every one to judge how far such evils or corruptions are to be found in our day." "I am persuaded that carnal notions of the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, lie at the bottom of many of the evils and corruptions in the day in which we live." Nothing but an intellect blinded by malice and depraved by wilful ignorance, could ever be led either to frame or support the first charge by these declarations. It was a part of Mr. Erskine's duty as a faithful minister of the gospel to exhort his hearers to make a personal application of the truths of God's Word to themselves. With regard to the other passage, it may be remarked that Mr. Erskine might have used even stronger language than he did, and still have been able to support it by the Scriptures. Carnal notions of Christ's kingdom lie at the bottom of all the corruptions in the church so far as



its government is concerned. In fact, carnal notions of Christ's kingdom are connected, in some way or other, with all corruption.

When Mr. Erskine asserted the kingship of Jesus Christ, he touched a tender place in a very considerable number of the ministers of the Church of Scotland at that time. The opinion was very common that the General Assembly and the commission was king over the heritage of God. This opinion, most assuredly had its origin in the carnal notions concerning the kingdom of Christ.

In answering the second charge, Mr. Erskine stated that the language upon which it was founded was not quoted correctly. He then read what he had said. It is as follows:

"There is a twofold call necessary for a minister meddling as a builder in the church of God; there is a call of God, and of his church. God's call consists in his qualifying a man for the work, and in his inspiring him with a holy zeal and desire to employ those qualifications for the glory of God and the good of his church. The call of the church lies in the free call and election of the Christian people. The promise of conduct and counsel in the choice of men that are to build, is not made to patrons, heritors, or any other set of men, but to the church, the body of Christ, to whom apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are given. As it is a natural privilege for every house or society of men to have the choice of their own servants or officers, so it is the privilege of the house of God, in a particular manner. What a miserable bondage would it be reckoned for any family to have stewards or servants imposed upon them by strangers who might give the children a stone for bread, or a scorpion instead of a fish, poison instead of medicine! And shall we suppose that God ever granted a power to any set of men, patrons, heritors, or whatever they may be, a power to impose servants on his family, without his own consent, they being the freest society in the world?"

Having read from his sermon the above quotation, Mr. Erskine calmly, but with an air of Christian majesty, said:

"I adhere to my notes, but deny that from what I said, it can be inferred that I look upon all the ministers of the Church of Scotland as thieves and robbers."

With regard to the latter clause of the second charge, he made the following declaration:

"From the Revolution till the act of patronage came to be in force, I know of no settlements but where the body of the Christian people concurred in the election of their minister, and in the practice of the church, till of late, they were allowed to vote."

This was the truth, and none but the grossly ignorant would have made a contradictory statement. With regard to the second charge, Mr. Erskine concluded by giving utterance to a



bold but as noble and scriptural a sentiment as ever escaped from the lips of man: "I own," said he, "the call of a minister ought not to be by heritors *as such*, since no such titles or distinctions of men are known in the kingdom of Christ. The only heritors that are there are they that are *rich in faith*." That church is surely in a most degraded state when it is willing to be governed by the rich to the exclusion of the godly poor.

The third charge was founded by the committee upon the following words in the sermon of Mr. Erskine:

"I do not remember of any particular act of Assembly, since the Revolution, by which the rights of the Crown of Christ are asserted, in opposition to the encroachments that were made upon them in those days of public apostacy and persecution."

Mr. Erskine told the Synod that in the event such an act of the Assembly could be shown, he would gladly own he was mistaken in what he had said. Every brave man, not to say Christian man, will own that this was honorable. What Mr. Erskine uttered was true, and the deductions he made from the facts were fair and just.

The fourth charge was founded upon what was said by Mr. Erskine about the act of the Assembly of 1732, giving the election of pastors to the heritors and elders. In reply to this charge Mr. Erskine said:

"I dare not retract my testimony against it (the act) either before the Assembly, the day after it was passed into an act, or by what I said in my sermon before this reversed synod, since I cannot see the authority of the King of Zion giving warrant to confer the power of voting in the election of ministers upon heritors, beyond other Christians."

It is highly probable that had Mr. Erskine said nothing against the act of the Assembly of 1732, no notice would have been taken of his sermon at all. Mistaken notions of the Kingdom of Christ lay at the bottom of that act. It gave a power and privilege in and over the church to the rich, which as rich men they did not possess. In Christ Jesus there are neither rich men nor poor men. To be possessed of countless acres, gives the owner no privileges in the church above the poor peasants who may cultivate those acres. Riches and titles are things of this world; but Christ's Kingdom is not of this world.



A spirited debate followed the reply of Mr. Erskine. This being ended, the Synod of Perth and Stirling, by a majority of six votes, declared Mr. Erskine censurable. Against this sentence twelve ministers and two ruling elders protested. Mr. Erskine and his son-in-law, who had not, on account of his relation to Mr. Erskine, been permitted to vote, protested, and appealed to the General Assembly. These dissents and protests amounted to nothing; for the Synod decided at once that Mr. Erskine be rebuked at their bar and be admonished to behave more orderly in the future.

When Mr. Erskine had given in his protest he retired; consequently, the rebuke could not, at that time be administered. It was ordered that he be called and rebuked on the following day. Mr. Erskine not appearing on the next day, the Synod ordered that he be called before their bar at their meeting in April, and be publicly rebuked and admonished.

The Synod met at Stirling on the 12th of April, 1733. Seven of the twelve ministers who had, at the meeting at Perth, in October, 1732, protested, being present, gave in their reasons of dissent. No effort that the friends of Mr. Erskine could make would satisfy the Synod. It was the fixed determination of the dominant party that Mr. Erskine should be rebuked and admonished, unless he would retract what he had said in his sermon at Perth. This he would not do.

The Moderator called Mr. Erskine in order to be rebuked and admonished; but Mr. Erskine, instead of receiving the rebuke, read a paper in which he declared his firm adherence to his former protest, and that he was not conscious of having done or said anything meriting a rebuke.

At this meeting a petition, signed by fifteen elders of the Session of the Church of Stirling, was given in to the committee of bills, but this committee refused to bring it before the Synod. This shows that Mr. Erskine enjoyed the confidence of his own people.

The Presbytery of Stirling also made an attempt to have the matter brought to a favorable issue, but failed.

Nothing more could be done until the meeting of the General Assembly. This court convened on the 3d of May, 1733, at Edinburgh. On the 14th the protest of Mr. Erskine came up for consideration.



For the purpose of coercing Mr. Erskine and his friends into an unmanly submission, the Assembly took up the case springing out of the violent settlement of Robert Stark over the congregation of Kinross.

Of the case of Mr. Erskine the Assembly made quick work. After the papers were read, and the parties heard, it was decided that Mr. Erskine had vented expressions which were offensive to the Assembly and calculated to disturb the peace of the church. That the matter might be brought to an end, it was decided that Mr. Erskine be immediately rebuked and admonished by the Moderator of the General Assembly. This sentence was executed, and the Synod of Perth and Stirling thanked for their diligence in watching over and guarding the interest and prerogatives of the Assembly.

To this rebuke Mr. Erskine could not submit in silence, and he so declared. At the same time he presented a written protest, to which William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff and James Fisher adhered.

The Assembly would not suffer this paper to be read, but insisted that it be withdrawn. This Mr. Erskine positively refused to do, and having laid the paper on the table, he and the other brethren, who adhered to his protest, walked out.

It is strange what mighty events often grow out of apparently insignificant circumstances. The paper laid by Mr. Erskine on the table, fell by accident, on the floor, and there it lay unnoticed for some time. Mr. Erskine and the three brethren who favored his cause, were gone, and it is probable they contemplated making no further effort before the church courts. Certain it is, they at this time had not the most distant idea of separating from the Church of Scotland. This was a remedy for evils that had as yet never entered their minds.

Near by the table sat James Naesmith, minister of Dalmeny. Mr. Naesmith took the paper from the floor, and having read it over, rose from his seat and in an excited tone called upon the Moderator to suspend the business of the Assembly until he would read the treasonable document. Had the paper contained a threat to subvert the doctrines and practices of the Church of Scotland, and to introduce in their stead the doctrines and practices of the heathen, no greater stir could have been made by the Assembly. Naesmith and the whole Assem-



bly became as violently excited as if the paper had offered a plain, positive and abusive insult to each and every member of the court. Had the paper contained an announcement that the British Parliament had passed a law depriving the people of Scotland of their civil and religious rights, and consigning them to the veriest vassalage, no greater uproar could have taken place.

That the reader may be able to form his own judgment of the paper, we shall give it entire:

"Although I have a very dutiful regard to the judicatories of the church, to whom I owe my subjection in the Lord; yet, in respect the Assembly have found me censurable, and tendered a rebuke and admonition to me, for things I conceive agreeable unto, and founded upon, the word of God and our approved standards, I find myself obliged to protest against the said censure as importing that I have, in my doctrines, at the opening of the Synod at Perth, October last, departed from the word of God and the aforesaid standards; and that I shall have liberty to preach the same truths of God, and to testify against the same or like defections of this church upon all proper occasions. And I do hereby adhere unto the testimony I have formerly emitted against the act of Assembly of 1732, whether in the protest entered against it in open Assembly, or yet in my Synodical sermon, praying this protest and declarations to be inserted in the records of the Assembly, and that I may be allowed extracts thereof.

"EBENEZER ERSKINE.

"May 14, 1733."

"We, undersubscribing ministers, dissenters from the sentence of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, do hereby adhere to the above protestation and declaration, containing a testimony against the act of Assembly of 1732, and asserting our privilege and duty to testify publicly against the same or like defections, upon all proper occasions.

"WILLIAM WILSON.

"ALEX. MONCRIEFF."

"I, Mr. James Fisher, Minister of Kinclaven, appellant against the sentence of the Synod of Perth, in this question, although the committee of bills did not think fit to transmit my reasons of appeal, find myself obliged to adhere unto the aforesaid protestation and declaration.

"JAMES FISHER."

It was the action of the Assembly respecting this protest and declaration, which shortly afterward led to the secession. This protest was mainly against the act of 1732.

It is important that the reader have a clear and distinct idea of the peculiar features of that act. It provided that pastors for vacant congregations be chosen by the heritors and elders. The heritors were the land-owners. The sum and substance of the act was that before any individual would be allowed to vote in the selection of a pastor for himself and family, he



must be a land owner. We need not say that such a law receives no sanction from the word of God. With great truthfulness and propriety, Mr. Erskine said, in his Synodical sermon, that, "Whatever church authority may be in that act, yet it wants the authority of the Son of God. All ecclesiastical authority under Heaven is derived from Him; and therefore any act that wants His authority, has no authority at all." Such were the sentiments of Mr. Erskine. He regarded the Son of God as the only law-giver in the church; the dominant party in the Church of Scotland thought differently. They regarded the General Assembly and commission infallible law-givers. The student of the Bible is left to judge which was right, Mr. Erskine or the dominant party in the church.

The Assembly, on hearing the protest of the Erskine party read, ordered its officer to go in search of the offenders. They were not found until mid-night. They had supposed that the matter was ended, and the probability is that they had concluded to give the Assembly no more trouble. Not that they were sorry for anything they had done or said, or that they were ready to abandon any of their former positions, but having so often failed to accomplish anything by protest, they had concluded to adhere strictly to the word of God and the approved standards of the church.

The next afternoon, the four brethren appeared before the Assembly. A committee was appointed to hold a private conference with Mr. Erskine and the brethren adhering to his protest, for the purpose of persuading him and them to withdraw their protest. This they would not consent to do. The committee reported accordingly. The Assembly, on hearing the report of this committee, adopted by an overwhelming majority the following overture :

The General Assembly ordains that the four brethren appear before the commission in August next, and then show their sorrow for their conduct and misbehavior, in offering to protest, and in giving in to this Assembly the paper by them subscribed, and that they retract the same. And in case they do not appear before the said commission, in August, and then show their sorrow and retract, as said is, the commission is hereby empowered and appointed to suspend the said brethren, or such of them as shall not obey, from the exercise of their ministry. And further, in case the said brethren shall be suspended by the said commission, and that they shall act contrary to the said sentence of suspension, the commission is hereby empowered and appointed, at their meeting in No-



vember, or any subsequent meeting, to proceed to a higher censure against the said four brethren, or such of them as shall continue to offend by transgressing this act. And the General Assembly do appoint the several presbyteries of which the said brethren are members to report to the commission in August, and subsequent meetings of it, their conduct and behavior with respect to this Act.

This is a most extraordinary act to be passed by a Presbyterian court. The offense of Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff and James Fisher consisted in "offering to protest" against anything the General Assembly might do or say! This was claiming indirectly, if not directly, infallibility for the Assembly. Such a claim, to whatever source it may trace its origin, is at variance with every principle of Presbyterianism, Protestantism and the Bible.

This overture had been prepared by the committee before they reported that the Erskine party would not withdraw their protest. This shows that the Assembly was determined that its edicts should, at all hazards, be obeyed. No one should be allowed to say that what the Assembly, in any case, might do or say, could be wrong.

After this overture had been adopted, Mr. Erskine and his three adhering brethren attempted to read a paper in which they stated that it was an uncommon mode of procedure to pass a positive sentence upon individuals without offering them the opportunity to defend themselves. Such being the case, they declare that "they were not at liberty to take this affair to an *advisandum*." No sooner did they begin to read this paper than the officer of the Assembly was ordered to remove them from the house. What could not be effected by brow-beating and contempt, the Assembly determined should be accomplished by a sergeant-at-arms. On the eighth of August the commission met at Edinburgh. Mr. Ebenezer Erskine and his three adhering friends appeared before the bar of the commission with a written defense. This defense they were told they would not be permitted to read, since the commission had resolved not to admit any papers which were offered. After some time was spent in discussing the propriety and reasonableness of the accused having the right to determine whether they would defend themselves in writing or *viva voce*, Messrs. Wilson, Moncrieff and Fisher were ordered to retire, and the commission pro-



ceeded to interrogate Mr. Erskine separately. He was asked if he was ready to profess sorrow for offering to protest against the authority of the Assembly, and to retract the sentiments contained in his protest. To this Mr. Erskine replied, in substance, that he was indeed sorry that what he had said and done had been interpreted as a contempt of the authority of any of the judicatories of the church; no such thing being designed by him. With regard to retracting his protestation, he said that he and his other brethren, having consulted upon this matter, had drawn up deliberately a paper which contained all he had to say on that point. He asked that he might read this paper. This privilege the Moderator refused to grant. Mr. Erskine was asked whether the paper was a retraction of his protest. To this, Mr. Erskine replied: "This court is abundantly capable to judge, upon their reading the paper." The commission now began to urge Mr. Erskine to retract his protest and make a confession of his sins. Having failed, they ordered him to be removed.

When Mr. Erskine had retired, a debate sprang up among the members of the commission as to whether the paper presented by Mr. Erskine should be read. The vote was taken, and the majority decided on its being read. Mr. Erskine was recalled and told to read his paper, which he did with a dignity that commanded the respect of even his bitter opponents. Messrs. Fisher, Wilson and Moncrieff were then separately called and asked the same question that had been propounded to Mr. Erskine. Their separate replies were nearly identical.

The object the commission had in view, in calling the protesters before them separately, was to break the ranks of the Dissenters. This they did not accomplish. The Erskine party were contending for the truth, and not for promotion. They could not be awed into measures which they did not approve; neither could they be wheedled into making an acknowledgment of sins which they did not believe they had committed. After some discussion, the vote was stated: "*Suspend the four protesting brethren from the exercise of the ministry and all parts thereof; or, Delay this affair?*" The question was put by the Moderator and carried, *Suspend*; but not unanimously. From this decision of the commission three ministers, viz: Henry Lindsay, Alexander Wardrop and James McGarrock, and Ruling



Elders Colonel John Erskine, Alexander Bruce and Albert Monro, dissented. Messrs. Erskine, Wilson, Moncrieff and Fisher protested against the decision, and declared that they would regard it as null and void, and would continue to exercise their ministerial functions as if no such sentence had been inflicted upon them.

It is proper to mention that so great was the interest felt in the Erskine party that petitions in their behalf were presented to the commission by the presbyteries of Stirling, Dunblane and Ellon, and by the magistrates, town councils and kirk sessions of Perth and Sterling. In this connection, it may also be mentioned that a very respectable minority of the commission were in favor of delaying the matter to a subsequent meeting. Hence the form of the vote—*Suspend; or Delay.*

The commission met again on the 14th of November. This meeting of the commission was looked forward to with the most intense anxiety by the whole of Scotland. It was known that the Assembly had peremptorily commanded the commission to suspend Mr. Erskine and his three friends, in case they did not retract their protest. It was also known that these four ministers had been suspended. The commission was further ordered to depose them from the gospel ministry, provided they did not submit to suspension. It was, in some sections of the country, a well-known fact that all four of these ministers had, in accordance with their own declarations, continued since the sentence of suspension was pronounced, to exercise their ministerial functions, as if no sentence of suspension had been inflicted. The question was asked in every circle, "What will the commission do with the protesters?" The sympathies of the people were in their favor. From all sections of the surrounding country the people, in vast numbers, assembled in Edinburgh. Long before the hour of meeting the Assembly house was full to its utmost capacity. The aisles were full, and in front of the doors an immense crowd of people was gathered. Before the members of the commission could enter the Assembly house the magistrates had to be called to make way for them through the crowd.

The commissioners being seated, Mr. Erskine and his three friends, in compliance with the summons which they had received, presented themselves before the bar. A kind of stereo-



typed mode of proceeding in this matter, from its commencement, was to appoint a committee to converse with the protesters. Again this was done. The committee having conversed with Mr. Erskine and his three brethren, and finding them still unwilling to retract their protest, so reported to the commission. The protesters were now asked if they *had* "*obeyed the sentence of the commission in August last, suspending them from the exercise of their ministry?*" They all replied that "*they had not.*"

According to the instructions given by the General Assembly, the commission had nothing more to do in the case, except depose the protesting ministers from the gospel ministry. This was what a number of the commission were anxious to do; but there were others who did not desire to see these four good men ruthlessly thrust out of the church. The former were in favor of proceeding at once to settle the matter. The latter were in favor of delaying it until March. The one party argued that the instructions of the Assembly made it binding upon the commission to proceed at once to inflict the higher censure upon the suspended ministers; while the other party argued that the matter might be delayed until March. That this point might be determined, a vote was stated: "*Proceed immediately to inflict a higher censure upon the four suspended ministers; or, Delay the same till March.*" It was found, on counting the votes, that the parties were equally divided. Mr. John Gowdie, the Moderator, in that case being entitled to a vote, cast it in favor of proceeding at once to depose the suspended ministers. This was the vote that thrust Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff and James Fisher out of the Church of Scotland. It was carried by a single vote, and that the vote of the Moderator.

Before the sentence was pronounced, another committee was appointed to converse with the suspended ministers. No amicable adjustment being effected, the commission agreed that the following should be the state of the question; "*Loose the relation of the said four ministers to their several charges, and declare them no longer ministers of this church, and prohibit all ministers of this church to employ them in any ministerial function; or, Depose them simpliciter?*"



The question was thus stated for the purpose of securing a majority. A very considerable number of the commission was opposed to voting upon the question at all, and were decidedly opposed to inflicting a censure of any kind upon the suspended ministers. These would neither vote "*Loose*," nor "*Depose*." The roll being called, it was found that a decided majority of those voting were in favor of inflicting the higher censure of the church upon the four suspended ministers.

The commission then proceeded to pass a formal sentence upon the protesters in the following language :

The commission of the General Assembly did, and hereby do loose the relation of Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, minister at Stirling ; Mr. William Wilson, minister at Perth ; Mr. Alexander Moncrieff, minister at Abernethy ; and Mr. James Fisher, minister at Kinclaven, to their said respective charges ; and do declare them no longer ministers of this church ; and do hereby prohibit all ministers of this church to employ them, or any of them, in any ministerial function. And the commission do declare the churches of the said Mr. Erskine, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Moncrieff and Mr. Fisher vacant from and after the date of this sentence ; and appoint that letters from the Moderator, and extracts from this sentence, be sent to the several Presbyteries within whose bounds the said ministers have had their charges, appointing them, as they are hereby appointed, to cause intimate this sentence in the foresaid several churches, now declared vacant, any time betwixt and the first of January next ; and also that notice of this sentence be sent, by letters from the Moderator of this commission to the magistrates of Perth and Stirling, to the sheriff-principal of Perth and bailie of the regality of Abernethy.

This sentence sounds very much like a proclamation issued by a king for the capture and execution of a band of highway robbers. We must remember that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and its commission claimed for themselves supreme authority over all the members of the National Church. The principles of Republicanism were not understood at that time. What, the reader may be ready to ask, had the sheriff-principal of Perth and bailie of the regality of Abernethy to do with this matter ? We answer, nothing, according to the word of God and principles of pure Presbyterianism. Christ's Kingdom is not of this world ; but this was not generally known in Scotland at the time of the secession. Well might Ebenezer Erskine say that "mistaken notions of Christ's Kingdom lay at the bottom of many errors."

We are not to suppose that the action of the commission met the approbation of an overwhelming majority in the National Church.



There were, at that time, only fifteen synods in Scotland. From seven of these synods petitions in favor of the Erskine party were sent to the commission. Six of these petitions entreated that the commission would delay proceeding to inflict the higher censure, and one plead that the suspended ministers might be dealt with tenderly. The synods sending up these petitions were, Angus and Mearns, Perth and Stirling, Dumfries, Moray, Ross, Galloway and Fife. It is certain, had the whole matter, from beginning to end, been left to a popular vote, either of the ministers or people, or of both together, the protesters would have been cleared by a tremendous majority.

It may be asked, how did it happen that in the General Assembly and commission there always was a majority against them? We reply, because of the ecclesiastical trickery which was practiced in selecting the members of the General Assembly. Those persons were, by a kind of ecclesiastical intrigue, chosen as members of the Assembly, who, it was known, would favor the very schemes which Mr. Erskine opposed. Against Mr. Erskine, either as a man or a minister, there was no opposition. No charge of immorality was ever brought against him or his three coadjutors, and it was not so much as said that his Perth sermon was not scriptural. The objection to it was that it was scriptural, but it would not do to advance this idea. Ebenezer Erskine and his three brethren were excommunicated from the Church of Scotland for a like reason that John the Baptist was beheaded.

Before leaving Edinburgh, the four excommunicated ministers agreed to meet at Gairney Bridge on the 5th of December following. This was a small village about three miles south of Kinross. At the appointed time and place, all four of them met. The first day was "spent in prayer, humiliation and conference together concerning the present providence of God concerning them." They were bold and fearless men, but not rash men. It was agreed that they should meet again on the following day. Ralph Erskine and Thomas Mair met with them on both days, and took part with them both in their prayers and conferences. On the following day they met, and after prayerfully considering the matter in all its probable results, both for time and eternity, this question was put: "*Constitute presently*



*into a presbytery or not?"* The vote to *constitute* was unanimous. At two o'clock on the 6th of December, 1733, the Associate Presbytery was regularly constituted by prayer by the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine. After prayer, Mr. Erskine was chosen moderator, and James Fisher, clerk.

Such was the origin of the Associate Presbytery, one of the religious denominations which entered into the union which formed the Associate Reformed Church.

Nothing can be more evident that although those who organized the Associate Presbytery were called Seceders, they did not secede, but were, by high-handed ecclesiastical tyranny, thrust out of the church of their fathers. For the Church of Scotland they never lost any of their first love; but to submit quietly to the usurpation of the corrupt party in that church, was what they could not do. The sequel will show that in the providence of God, no door was opened by which they, in consistency with their convictions of truth and right, could return to the mother church, but they continued to labor diligently and profitably in the organization which necessity forced them to form. Their names will go down to the latest generation of men as Seceders, and probably all their descendants will bear the name; but they did not secede.



## CHAPTER IV.

REFORMED PRESBYTERIANS—Called by different Names : Covenanters, Cameronians, Society People, and Strict Presbyterians—Covenanters not Distinctive—The Church of Scotland a Covenanting Church—Frequently entered into Covenant with God—Fluctuations in the Church of Scotland—First Reformation—Culdees Suppressed—Moral Darkness—Lollards of Kyle—First Confession of Faith—National Covenant—Presbyterianism Established by Act of Parliament—Elizabeth Died—James VI. Becomes King—English Dissenters—Millenary Petition—Hampton Court—James Abuses the Puritans—Character of James—Westminster Assembly—Confession of Faith Ratified by the Church of Scotland—Charles I. Put to Death—Charles II. Crowned—Cromwell Dies—Charles II. Brought Back—"Killing Period"—Origin of Reformed Presbyterians—Parties in the Church of Scotland—Charles Exhumes the Bones of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw—Apprehends the Marquis of Argyle—Argyle Put to Death—Guthrie Executed—Rescissory Act Passed—Drinking Parliament—Three Thousand Ministers Ejected—Twenty Thousand Presbyterians put to Death—Cameronians would make no Compromise—Rise of the Strict Presbyterians, 1679—Order to Apprehend Welsh, Cameron, Douglass and Kid—Murder of Archbishop Sharp—Persecutions on Account of Robert Hamilton—Rutherglen Declaration—Battle of Drumclog—Bothwell Bridge—Queensferry Paper—The Three Presbyterian Ministers, Cameron, Cargill and Douglass—Cameron Killed, 1680—Cargill Executed, 1681—Society People send Young Men to Holland to Receive Ordination—Alexander Peden, James Renwick, Alexander Shields, Thomas Boyd, and David Houston—Peden's Body Exhumed and Insulted—Renwick, the Last of the Scotch Martyrs—Cameronian Principles—Prince of Orange—Linning, Boyd, and Shields Join the National Church—Houston without Influence—Religious Instruction among the Society People—First Meeting of the Society.

As stated in the previous chapter, the Associate Reformed Church is the result of a union which was formed between the Associate and the Reformed Presbyterian churches in America. The members of the Associate Church were generally called Seceders, while those of the latter were always spoken of as Covenanters. Both had their origin in Scotland, and with some minor exceptions were, from the beginning, identical in all their religious beliefs and practices.

The history of the Associate Church has been briefly narrated. It is our purpose, in the present chapter, to give a similar outline of the history of the Reformed Presbyterians.



In ecclesiastical history, and especially in the history of Scotland, the Reformed Presbyterians are called by a number of names. Generally they are called "Covenanters," sometimes they are designated as "Cameronians," and frequently they are mentioned as "Society People." Like the Associate Presbyterians, they were an offshoot from the Church of Scotland. Not that they departed from any of the principles or practices set forth in the standards of that church. On the contrary, while the multitude followed worldly devices, they clung, with true and unflinching devotion, to the high reformation attainments which the Church of Scotland had made in its palmy days. Never have they been charged with a want of devotion to the standards of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. For it they were willing to die. For it hundreds of them did die. It was dearer to them than life. Not that they had a blind, superstitious devotion to these formulas of doctrine. Their faith was founded upon correct Bible knowledge. It was not a stupid credence which believes everything without being able to give a reason for anything.

The appellation *Covanter* is not sufficiently distinctive to enable us to distinguish the Reformed Presbyterians from the National Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Ever since the days of the Reformation, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland has been a covenanting church. On many occasions did the ministers and people enter into solemn engagements "that by the grace of God they would strive, with their whole power, substance and very lives, to maintain, set forward and establish the most blessed word of God and his congregations." The First Covenant was subscribed at Edinburgh, on the 3d day of December, 1557. This was during the days of John Knox. At Perth, on the 31st of May, 1559, the Second Covenant was subscribed, in the name of the whole congregation, by the Earls of Argyle and Glencairn, and by Lords Stewart, Boyd and Ochiltree, and by Matthew Campbell of Terringland.

At various other times, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland entered publicly into covenant with God. This being the case, Reformed Presbyterians are not accurately distinguished when they are called Covenanters, without we take into consideration the fact that of all others, they most rigidly adhered to their covenanted vows.



In order that we may discover the rise of the Reformed Presbyterian church, it will be necessary for us to trace the various fluctuations, which, at different periods, took place in the Church of Scotland.

The first reformation from Popery began in Scotland about the year 1490. The Culdees had been suppressed, and for two hundred years a moral night brooded over the land. "Half the wealth of the nation was in the possession of a few individuals who lived in pomp and splendor, while the multitude of the people were miserably poor and degradedly ignorant. The revenues of the church were bestowed upon dice-players, strolling bards and the illegitimate sons of the bishops. Of religion scarcely the name remained. The highest dignitaries in the church never discharged any of its public or private duties, and the lives of the inferior clergy were brutally vile."

Like the pleasant rays of a morning sun, after a long and gloomy night, a faint light, in 1490, began to appear in the western districts of Kyle, Carrick and Cunningham. The demons of darkness were startled from their murky lairs and a desperate rush was made to extinguish its mellow rays. The Lollards were dragged before the Great Council, but a kind Providence interfered in their behalf. The enraged bishops were disconcerted in their nefarious plans, and the Lollards were dismissed with a gentle admonition "to beware of new doctrines and to content themselves with the faith of the church."

This first reformation, began by the Lollards, was brought to a happy issue about the year 1560. In that year the *First Confession of Faith* was adopted and the reformation established. The main instrument chosen by God for bringing about this wonderful change in the spiritual affairs of Scotland was John Knox.

The Church of Scotland, now established on a Scripture basis, continued to grow. The social and intellectual condition of the masses was greatly improved. In the year 1580, a national Covenant was formed for the support of the reformation. This instrument was subscribed by King James VI. and his household. In the following year it was subscribed by the people of Scotland generally, and again in 1590.



In 1592, Presbyterian form of church government was, by an Act of the Parliament, established in Scotland. At the same time the Parliament ratified some of the leading propositions of the Second Book of Discipline.

During a period of one hundred years the reformation had been slowly but surely advancing in Scotland. The Parliamentary enactment of 1592 has ever since been looked upon as THE GREAT CHARTER OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND. The struggle had been great. Queen Mary and many of the nobles placed themselves in deadly opposition to the reformation, and by every means within their reach thwarted, as far as they could, its progress. James VI., her son and successor, was, notwithstanding his high pretensions, never in full sympathy with Presbyterianism. His predilections were all in favor of Prelacy as being more favorable to monarchy.

In March, 1603, Elizabeth, Queen of England, died, and James VI., of Scotland, ascended the throne of England with the title of James I. Prelacy had been established in England by Henry VIII., but a very large and influential number of the English people were Dissenters. These Dissenters are generally known in ecclesiastical history as Puritans.

When James arrived in London, he was met by a number of the Puritan ministers who laid before him what is called the *Millenary Petition*. This name was given it because in the preamble the petitioners state that they, "to the number of more than a thousand ministers, groan under the burden of human rites and ceremonies." This petition was, however, signed by only seven hundred and fifty ministers. These were from only twenty-five counties, which shows that the statement in the petition was true. It also shows that the people of England were greatly divided concerning church rites and ceremonies.

James was exceedingly vain and conceited. Anxious to make a display of his theological learning, he appointed a conference between the Puritans and Prelatists at Hampton Court. The debate was to take place in the presence of the King, who was to be judge.

In this famous Hampton Court conference, James plainly showed that he was not disposed to deal fairly. The Puritans were treated with contempt, and finally he threatened "to



make them conform, or he would *harrie* them out of the land, or else do worse." This was a sad speech for James. It resulted in the beheading of his son Charles and contributed to the final overthrow of the race of Stuarts.

On the last day of March, the intelligence of the death of Elizabeth reached Scotland. James was immediately proclaimed King of Scotland, England, France and Ireland. On the following Sabbath, in the High Church of Edinburgh, he, in presence of the assembled people, declared his approbation of the Church of Scotland. The greater part of the people had, before this, ceased to have any confidence in the King's declarations. He had already proven, by his acts, that he was an unscrupulous villain who would solemnly engage to do one thing and deliberately do the very opposite.

By the unrighteous acts of James I. and his successor Charles I. the Church of Scotland was greatly disturbed. A strenuous effort was made by both to root out Presbyterianism, and they succeeded in part.

The Puritans of England, who, in the days of James I., were "groaning under the burden of human rites and ceremonies," determined, during the reign of Charles I., to free themselves of this burden. Charles was rightly regarded as being favorably inclined to Popery.

On the 12th of June, 1643, the English Parliament passed an ordinance calling an assembly of "learned and Godly divines." This was what is known as the Westminster Assembly. They met, in accordance with the call, on the 1st day of July, 1643. During their deliberations they framed the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Shorter and the Larger Catechisms. To this Assembly the Scotch sent six commissioners.

On the 4th of August, 1647, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met and ratified the Westminster Confession. On the 30th of January, 1649, Charles I. was beheaded, and in a short time Oliver Cromwell made himself master of England.

The Scotch were opposed to the execution of Charles I., and immediately on his death proclaimed his son Charles II., King; and on the 1st of January, 1651, crowned him at Scone. The Duke of Argyle, Archibald Campbell, placed the crown on his



head. Charles II., before being crowned, subscribed the Covenant. For nine years he was forced to live in exile—so long as Cromwell had the control of the government. On the 3d of September, 1658, Cromwell died, leaving his son Richard to succeed him. Richard wanted his father's capacity, and he was totally without his ambition.

During the period of Cromwell's Commonwealth, the Scotch were greatly disturbed. In fact, the nation was reduced to subjection; but, strange to say, in no period of the history of the Church of Scotland, was religion in a more flourishing condition.

After the death of Cromwell, the English people, tired of the unsettled state of affairs, began to desire a king. Charles was brought back and placed on the throne of his ancestors, with the title of Charles II. This event took place on the 29th of May, 1660.

Although the Scotch had been the constant friends of Charles II. during his exile, this was the beginning of sufferings to Scotland unparalleled in the annals of any people. The period extending from the crowning of Charles II., in 1660, to the Revolution of 1688, is, with eminent propriety, called the "Killing Time."

It was during this period that the strict Covenanters, or Reformed Presbyterians, became visible to the world.

The Scotch acted rashly in proclaiming Charles II. King, and they seem to have been deluded, in that they disapproved of the execution of Charles I. He deserved death by law, and so did his father, James I.

Some nations trace their greatness to their sovereigns; but England and Scotland have attained a truly enviable greatness by opposing their sovereigns. The favorite expression of James I. was: "No bishop, no king," and all his descendants were ready to say anything in order to be able to tyrannize over the people.

During the time of Charles I. the people of Scotland became divided. Three parties, bitterly opposed to each other, sprung into existence. These were: First, the strict Presbyterians, or Covenanters; second, the Hamiltonian party; and third, the Royalists. The Hamiltonian party had turned traitor to the national cause, and secretly concluded a treaty with the King.



The Hamiltonians and Royalists, since the ultimate object aimed at by both was the same, readily united. This threw the strict Presbyterian party in the minority. This was one of the greatest calamities which ever befel the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. It opened the door for errors in doctrine, and paved the way for the introduction of Prelacy.

When Charles II. ascended the throne of England, made vacant by the execution of his father, he found the Church of Scotland in a proper condition to become an easy prey to its enemies. To show his resentment to the Puritans, he had the bones of Cromwell, Ireton and Bradshaw exhumed, and, as if still animated with life, hanged upon a felon's gallows and then buried beneath it.

Strong filial affection may be urged as a palliation for thus insulting the dead bodies of men who were his superiors in every respect, and whom he feared while living; but no extenuation can be offered in favor of his conduct toward the Marquis of Argyle. This nobleman had placed the crown upon the head of Charles at Scone, soon after the death of his father.

Immediately after the restoration of Charles II., Argyle was earnestly solicited by many of the strict Presbyterian party to go to London and hold a conference with the King in behalf of the church. His personal regard for the King readily induced him to undertake the mission. Argyle, suspecting no danger, set out on his journey. He reached London on the 8th of July, only one month after the return of the King, and immediately repaired to Whitehall to salute his sovereign. No sooner, however, had the King heard of his arrival, than he ordered Sir William Flemming to apprehend him and convey him to the tower. The ungrateful King caused him to be tried for treason, because he had entered into the Solemn League and Covenant with England. On the 27th of May, 1661, the Christian nobleman's head was severed from his body and fixed upon the toll-booth of Edinburgh. Orders were, in a short time, given to imprison Sir James Stuart, Sir John Chiesley and Sir Archibald Johnston.

Charles, notwithstanding his former solemn vows and fair promises, showed in no ambiguous way, by this act, that he hated Presbyterians and Presbyterianism, and the more strict the order the more deadly his hatred toward it. Hence the



Protesters were more obnoxious to this ungrateful tyrant than any others. In order that he might break the unity of these faithful servants of God, the Rev. James Guthrie was indicted for high treason, condemned and executed; and that terror might be spread among the ranks of the Protestors, his head was fixed on the netherbow of the city of Edinburgh, his estate confiscated, and his arms torn down.

In 1661, a Scotch Parliament was called by the King. This Parliament, during the years 1661 and 1662, removed, as far as was within the power of man, all that was near and dear to the strict Presbyterians of Scotland. The rescissory act was passed, and all parliamentary acts favoring the work of the Reformation of religion were repealed.

So sweeping was this rescissory act, that it removed every landmark in church and state. The blow was aimed at the Presbyterian church, but it struck everything that freemen held dear. The pillars upon which rests civil society were displaced, and the fair fabric tottered and fell.

This Parliament was stigmatized as the "Drinking Parliament." The members spent the night in drunken revels, and went reeling and staggering to the Parliament, where they made enactments unworthy of any people possessed of even the lowest degree of civilization.

During the year 1662 and 1663 near three thousand faithful ministers in England, Scotland and Ireland were ejected from their congregations because they would not accept a form of church government which they regarded as unscriptural, and conform to a mode of worship papal in its origin and papal in all its tendencies. Among these ejected ministers were Donald Cargill, one of the staunch advocates of Reformed Presbyterian principles, and Henry Erskine, the father of Ebenezer Erskine, the leader in the session of 1733.

During the reign of Charles II. and his brother James II., twenty thousand persons were put to death because they were Presbyterians; many were subjected to the boot, the thumbkin and the fire-match, while others were banished to America and sold as slaves, and from others the most exorbitant fines were extorted.



These were truly times that tried men's souls. Many conformed, and others accepted of indulgences, and by the multitude the standard of Presbyterianism was lowered.

A few would make no compromise with the dominant party. These formed the germ from which, in due time, grew the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

As it is difficult to state with absolute precision the exact moment that the cloud which is to water the earth and cause it to bring forth bread for the eater and seed for the sower begins to form, so it is difficult to specify the precise day when Reformed Presbyterian principles began first to assume a distinctive form. Notwithstanding this, we feel safe in naming the year 1679 as the period when the germ from which they sprang began to show visible signs of life. This was one of the most eventful years in the history of Scotland. Its records might, with eminent propriety, be written in blood. A reward was offered for the apprehension of any non-conforming ministers, and an order was issued to take John Welsh, Richard Cameron, Thomas Douglass and John Kid, dead or alive. The order provided that "in case these men shall resist they shall be pursued to death, and the officer or soldier who shall kill them shall not be called in question civilly or criminally." This was, by a number of persons, regarded as a declaration of war against these three men.

Three days after this order was issued, nine daring spirits determined to assassinate one Carmichall, whom Bishop Sharp had employed to exterminate Presbyterianism in Fifeshire. Carmichall, by his brutal cruelties, drove the people to despair. Nine individuals secretly laid a plan either to put him to death or drive him from the country. Carmichall having heard that some persons were inquiring for him—and as a guilty conscience makes its possessor a coward—kept himself concealed.

The persons who were looking for him were about to disband, when it was learned that Bishop Sharp was approaching. One of the party exclaimed: "Our arch-enemy is delivered into our hands." It was then proposed that they put him to death. One of them, Hackston, was opposed to their laying violent hands on the bishop, but finding his companions determined, he consented to remain with them.



Sharp was then on his way to London in order to consummate a plan which he had devised for the complete destruction of Presbyterianism in Scotland.

The party having determined to take his life, rode to Magus Moor, about three miles from St. Andrew's. The coach in which was the bishop, now came in view. The party rushed forward at full gallop, for the purpose of intercepting it. The bishop, discovering that he was pursued, urged the driver to hasten his speed.

The pursuers soon overtook him, when one of them dismounted the driver, cut the traces, and put an end to the flight of the miserable bishop. Calling him by the name of him who betrayed the Son of God into the hand of sinners, he was ordered to come out of his coach and prepare to die. In the most piteous tones he begged for his life, and clung to his daughter who was accompanying him. The party fired upon him, but without effect.

It was manifest that so long as the bishop remained in the coach he could not be put to death without taking the life of his daughter. This the party did not desire to do. Again he was ordered to come out of the coach, or they would drag him out. He obeyed, but continued to beg for his life. In the moment of despair he promised to give the men money, to abandon prelacy, and to do any and everything which might be demanded, if they would only spare his life. He was told of his perjury, of his betraying his friends, and of the eighteen years of bloodshed which he had caused. The conscience-smitten primate stood apparently forsaken of God. He was ordered to prepare for death. In this trying moment he was unable to offer up one petition. This caused those who had determined to take his life to stand for a moment appalled. During this moment the despairing bishop crept to Hackston, who had not dismounted, and begged him to interpose in his behalf. Hackston replied: "I shall never lay a hand upon you." At this instant the party fired and the bishop fell. The party now prepared to depart; but on looking back and discovering that the bishop was still alive, they returned and put an end to his life with their swords.

This deed, perpetrated by a few individuals, which the Presbyterian party never claimed to be lawful, incited the King



and his vile minions to resolve upon the extermination of all who bore the Presbyterian name. The country was filled with tools of the prelatie party in search of the murderers of Sharp. Houses were searched and the inmates asked "whether they approved of the killing of the archbishop."

The point at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue and resistance becomes a duty, had now been clearly reached. At least, this was the opinion of a few. These were headed by Robert Hamilton, a man, whatever were his defects, of acknowledged personal piety. Robert Hamilton and a few others, mostly laymen, thought the time had now arrived when it was their duty to resist the tyrannical usurpations of the dominant party. Richard Cameron, Donald Cargill, and Thomas Douglass, adopted the bold and defiant sentiments of these men.

On the 29th of May, 1679, the anniversary of the return of Charles II., less than one hundred of these friends of civil and religious liberty went armed to Rutherglen. Bonfires, in commemoration of the Restoration, had been kindled. These they extinguished, and burned the acts of Parliament and Council, which devoted the Presbyterians to destruction. In addition to this, they read a Declaration and Testimony of their own. After having affixed a copy of this paper to the market-cross, they peaceably retired.

This was a move in advance of the age, and may be regarded as the first public act of the Covenanters or Reformed Presbyterian Church. It produced intense indignation among the prelatie party and led to the battle of Drumclog, in which Graham of Claverhouse was defeated.

As the Rutherglen Declaration and Testimony is rarely, if ever, met with in modern books, and also contains facts that are worthy of being preserved, but especially since it was declared a proclamation of open rebellion, we have concluded to insert it entire:

"As the Lord hath been pleased to keep and preserve his interest in this land, by the testimony of faithful witnesses from the beginning, so some in our days have not been wanting, who, upon the greatest of hazards, have added their testimony to the testimony of those who have gone before them, and who have suffered imprisonments, finings, forfeitures, banishments, torture and death from an evil and perfidious adversary to the church and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in the land. Now, we being pursued by the same adversary for our



lives; while owning the interest of Christ, according to his word, and the National and Solemn League and Covenants, judge it our duty (though unworthy, yet hoping we are true members of the Church of Scotland), to add our testimony to those of the worthies who have gone before us, in witnessing against all things that have been done publicly in prejudice of his interest, from the beginning of the work of reformation, especially from the year 1648 downward to the year 1660; but more particularly those since, as:

"1st. Against the Act rescissory for overturning the whole covenanted reformation.

"2d. Against the acts for erecting and establishing of abjured prelacy.

"3d. Against that declaration imposed upon and subscribed by all persons in public trust, where the covenants are renounced and condemned.

"4th. Against the Act and Declaration published at Glasgow for outing of the faithful ministers who would not comply with prelacy, whereby three hundred and upward of them were illegally ejected.

"5th. Against that presumptuous Act for imposing an holy anniversary day, as they call it, to be kept yearly upon the 29th of May, as a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving for the King's birth and restoration; whereby the appointers have intruded upon the Lord's prerogative, and the observers have given the glory to the creature that is due to our Lord Redeemer, and rejoiced over the setting up and usurping power to the destroying the interest of Christ in the land.

"6th. Against the explicatory Act, 1669, and the sacriligious supremacy enacted and established thereby.

"Lastly. Against the Acts of Council, their warrants and instructions to, for indulgence, and all other their sinful and unlawful Acts, made and executed by them, for promoting their usurped supremacy.

"And for confirmation of this our Testimony, we do this day, being the 29th of May, 1679, publicly, at the Cross of Rutherglen, most justly burn the above-mentioned Acts, to evidence our dislike and testimony against the same, as they have unjustly, perfidiously and presumptuously burned our sacred Covenants."

Perhaps the reader may be unable to discover anything very noteworthy in this *Declaration and Testimony*. Let it be remembered that the men who published this paper were living in the midst of a people who had not as yet learned that a government could exist without a king, and who believed that the king was head of the church. However far the sentiments of the Rutherglen Declaration are behind those of the present age, they were as much in advance of those of the age in which they were penned.

The Presbyterians now became divided, and every event which transpired only served to make the line of separation more distinct.

This division was attended with many misfortunes. To it may be traced the unfortunate affair at Bothwell Bridge; but in the end it was productive of great good. The nation, with-



out acknowledging it, finally adopted, at least in part, the sentiments of the Covenanters, and drove the race of Stuarts from the throne of England.

On the 3d of June, 1680, the Covenanters, in the *Queens-ferry Paper*, as it is called, uttered a sentiment, which, near one hundred years afterward, was fully evolved in America. This is it:

“We do declare that we shall set up over ourselves, and over what God shall give us power of, government and governors according to the word of God;—that we shall no more commit the government of ourselves and the making of laws for us to any one single person, this kind of government being most liable to inconveniences, and aptest to degenerate into tyranny.”

There is rebellion in this. It is the language of men struggling to be free. It contains republican sentiments expressed in strong language. The principle upon which it is based, is that “every immoral constitution is disapproved of by God; and no man ought to swear allegiance to a power which God does not recognize.”

After the Rutherglen and Queen’s Ferry *Declarations*, the Covenanters kept themselves aloof from all except their own party. They were few in number, and had but three ministers—Richard Cameron, Donald Cargill and Thomas Douglass. The two former were the most zealous, and the first was the acknowledged leader. Hence the Covenanters received the name of Cameronians. Cargill was a bold and fearless man. On the 17th of September, 1680, in the presence of a large congregation, he fearlessly excommunicated from the privileges of the visible church the King, the Duke of York, the Duke of Monmouth, the Duke of Lauderdale, the Duke of Rothes, General Dalziel and Sir George McKenzie.

Cameron fell at Airdsmoss, on the 22d of July, 1680; but Cargill took the blood-stained standard from the field and bore it aloft until he was captured, and then, having been soon after condemned of high treason, was executed at Edinburgh, on the 27th of July, 1681.

The Covenanters were now without a minister; but the societies sent over to Holland a number of young men to be educated with a view to entering the gospel ministry. So rigidly Presbyterian were these Society people or Cameronians, that



they would not recognize any one as a minister of the New Testament church who had not been regularly ordained by a presbytery.

They had severed all ecclesiastical connection with what they regarded the corrupt church of Scotland, and consequently were dependent upon foreign churches for ministerial ordination. In due time God raised up Alexander Peden, James Renwick, Alexander Shields, Thomas Boyd and David Houston to minister to the Cameronians in holy things.

Alexander Peden died on the 26th of January, 1686. "He was," says one who was able to judge, "a singularly pious man." This did not protect him from the cruelties of the prelatie party. On the contrary, it maddened their hatred into a diabolical frenzy. When he died, he was privately buried by David Boswell, in the church of Auchinleck; but the soldiers, by whom he had been driven from mountain to moss, having learned the place of his interment, exhumed his bones after they had lain in the grave for forty days, and took them to Cumnock and buried them at the foot of a gallows.

James Renwick, who was ordained by the Classis of Gröningen to the full work of the gospel ministry, returned to Scotland, and for a period of five years was faithful in preaching Christ and him crucified to the persecuted Cameronians. On the 17th of February, 1688, in the twenty-sixth year of his age, and the sixth of his ministry, he was put to death for his devotion to the crown-rights of Jesus and his Republican principles. The charge against him is in these words:

"You, James Renwick, have shaken off all fear of God and respect and regard to his majesty's authority and laws; and having entered yourself into the society of some rebels of most damnable and pernicious principles, and disloyal practices, you took upon you to be a preacher to those traitors, and became so desperate a villain, that you did openly and frequently preach in the fields, declaiming against the authority and government of our sovereign lord, the King, denying that our most gracious sovereign, King James the Seventh, is lawful King of these realms, asserting that he was an usurper, and that it was not lawful to pay cess or taxes to his majesty; but that it was lawful and the duty of subjects to rise in arms and make war against his majesty and those commissioned by him."

This indictment states the truth so far as denying the authority of King James was concerned. One political principle of the Cameronians was that the abuse of power abrogates the right to use it. They boldly declared that James II. of Eng-



land, and VII. of Scotland, by his abuse of power, had forfeited all title to the crown, and that it should be conferred on the Prince of Orange. This principle all Protestants adopted, to a limited extent, at the Revolution of 1688, and drove the Stuarts from the throne of England.

After the death of Renwick, the gospel was preached and the sacraments administered among the Society people, until the time of the Revolution, by Shields, Linning and Boyd. Before this, however, a few individuals in Ireland had espoused the Cameronian principles. These were ministered unto by David Houston.

On the settlement of the Prince of Orange and the reëstablishing of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Shields, Linning and Boyd went into the National church. Houston only remained true to his principles, but he seems not to have had much influence with the societies. This being the case, the Cameronians were left almost without a minister.

In this condition they remained for a period of sixteen years. During this time they continued to meet in societies and renew the covenants which their fathers had made with God. The Sabbath was remembered and kept holy by these pious people. Their children were brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The older and more experienced instructed the young; and notwithstanding they never waited upon the ministry of any of the clergy, they made greater attainments in religious knowledge than those who did.

To many it may seem strange that the covenanters did not go into the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, as restored and reorganized under William the Prince of Orange. For this they were, at the time, greatly abused, and ever since, they have by a certain class of the human family, been held up to the world as a set of narrow-minded bigots.

No doubt these people exhibited a culpable amount of stubbornness, and sometimes magnified motes into mountains; but when all the facts are investigated, they present an example of unparalleled consistency. The Prince of Orange was a Presbyterian, but he apostatized, and becoming the head of the Church of England, exercised supreme control over the Church of Scotland. Episcopacy was established in England and Ireland, and Presbyterianism was simply permitted in Scotland



for no other and no better reason than that it was agreeable to the people. The prerogative to convene and dissolve the General Assembly was vested in the King's commissioner. The Society people claimed that the King might convene the General Assembly of the church, in extraordinary cases, for the purpose of giving him advice ; but further than this he had no Scriptural authority to go.

It was the misfortune of these Society people that they were in advance of the age in which they lived. Their notions of Presbyterianism were clear and correct. It is not claimed that they never erred, even in the application of their own principles. Neither is it denied that they sometimes pushed their principles too far, and thus ran into extremes.

It is a fact that they did not enter the Presbyterian church after the Revolutionary Settlement. They were not led by their ministers ; for all the ministers, except one—Houston—deserted the people and joined the Established church.

From the death of James Renwick, in 1688, to 1707, these devoted people were without a living ministry.

Soon after the martyrdom of Cargill, they began to form themselves into societies for religious worship, and in the latter part of 1681, a general meeting of these societies, by deputies, convened at Logan House, in the parish of Lesmahgow, Lanockshire. These society meetings were greatly blessed by the King and Head of the church for the good of these despised people.



## CHAPTER V.

REFORMED PRESBYTERIANS, CONTINUED.—The Rev. John McMillan Adopts the Sentiments of the Cameronians—Is Deposed—Covenanters improperly called McMillanites—McMillan's Congregation Cling to Him—General Meeting of the Society People, in October, 1706—Call Presented to Mr. McMillan—Begins His Pastoral Labors in 1707—Union of England and Scotland—Society People Opposed the Union—The Rev. John McNeil Joins the Society People—Protestation and Testimony of the United Societies—Sanquhar Declaration—Objections to the Union of England and Scotland—Protestation and Appeal—Religious and Political Parties in Scotland—Friends of the Pretenders and Foes of the House of Hanover—Renewing the Covenants—The Rev. John McMillan Defective as an Organizer—John McNeil never Ordained—Efforts to Organize a Presbytery—Adamson, McHendry, Taylor and Gilchrist Deposed—Society People Attempt to Form a Union with them—Also, with the "Marrow" Men—Thomas Nairn Leaves the Associate Presbytery and Joins the Society People—The Reformed Presbytery Constituted, August 1st, 1743—Nairn Returns to the National Church—Doctrines of the Society People—Political Opinions—Covenanters come to America—Sent to New Jersey—Lord Pitlochy—Covenanters Scatter over the Country—Their Number and Places of Residence in Scotland—Begin to Emigrate to America—Form Societies in America—First General Meeting at Middle Octoraro, March 4th, 1744—Covenanters Joined by Rev. Alexander Craighead—Mr. Craighead's Difficulties—His Congregation Called "Craighead Society"—Mr. Craighead Publishes a Pamphlet—Thomas Cookson Complains to the Synod of Philadelphia—The Synod Condemn the Pamphlet—The Rev. John Cuthbertson Comes to America—Mr. Cuthbertson's Labors—First Communion—The Rev. Alexander McDowell and Mr. Cuthbertson Labor Together—Revs. Linn and Dobbin Come to America—Reformed Presbytery Constituted—Synod Organized—Division in the Synod.

In 1703, John McMillan, a minister of the Church of Scotland, adopted, at least in part, the opinions of the Cameronians. For this he was tried and condemned and deposed from the gospel ministry. The charge brought against him was that he held anti-government principles.

From John McMillan the Covenanters were formerly, in reproach, called "McMillanites;" but in no proper sense can it be said that John McMillan is the founder of the Covenanter or Reformed Presbyterian church. Instead of the Society People or Cameronians adopting the opinions of John McMillan, he adopted the opinions of the Society People, and that not at



once, but gradually. Immediately after he was deposed, the effort was made to drive him away from the congregation of Balmaghie, of which he was pastor. The people, to a man, clung with ardent attachment to their pastor, whom they dearly loved. For some time Mr. McMillan abstained from the exercise of his ministry; but despairing of ever being able to secure an impartial hearing in the courts of the Established Church of Scotland, he resumed his ministerial labors; not in the Church of Scotland, however, but among the Society People.

In October, 1706, a general meeting of the Society People was held at Crawford-John. At this meeting a call was presented to Mr. McMillan to labor among them. This call was not gotten up hastily. It seems that the matter had been under consideration for several years, and the call was not presented at this meeting until it had been thoroughly discussed by the people. Mr. McMillan accepted the call, but for some reason that we have not been able to discover, did not begin his pastoral labors among the Society People until December, 1707.

It should be mentioned in this place, that in this year (1707) the union of England and Scotland was consummated. For fully one hundred years this matter had been under consideration. From the time of James VI the two nations had been governed by one monarch, but each had its own parliament and national laws. In 1707 the two nations were united and the Scotch parliament was abolished. This union was far from being agreeable to the whole Scotch nation. Among those who opposed the union were the Society people. While negotiations were going on, they opposed the contemplated union, and after the Scotch parliament had risen, never again to be seated, they protested against what had been done.

About this time John McNeil, who had been deprived of his licensè, because of his opposition to the course pursued by both church and state, attached himself to the Society People. Under the inspection of McMillan and McNeil a paper was drawn up by some of the Society People, which bears the following title: "*Protestation and Testimony of the United Societies of the Witnessing Remnant of the Antipopish, Antiprelatic, Antierastian, Antisectarian, true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland, against the sinful Incorporating Union with England and their*



*British Parliament, Concluded and Established May, 1707.*" This paper was published at Sanquhar, on the 22d of October, 1707. It is known as the "Sanquhar Declaration," and was the third of the kind which had been published. It is still a standard document among Reformed Presbyterians, and sets forth very clearly the views held by the Cameronians.

The objections to the union of England and Scotland, as stated in the "Sanquhar Declaration," may be arranged under two heads: First, Because, by a union with England, Scotland loses her national identity; or, in the language of the Declaration itself: "By this incorporating union with England in their sinful terms, this nation (Scotland) is debased and enslaved, its ancient independency lost and gone; the *parliamentary power* dissolved, which was the very strength, bulwark and basis of all liberties and privileges of persons of all ranks; of all manner of courts and judicatories, corporations and societies within this kingdom, all which now must be at the disposal and discretion of the *British Parliament.*" Second, That by the union, the second Article of the Solemn League and Covenant was violated. The reasoning runs thus: The second Article of this Solemn League and Covenant binds those taking it to "endeavor the extirpation of popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, scism." &c. The established Church of England is prelatic in its government; therefore, all who are in favor of the union of England and Scotland, tacitly assent to prelacy, and thus violate the second Article of the Solemn League and Covenant.

In September, 1708, another paper, entitled "Protestation, Declinature and Appeal," was prepared and signed by Mr. McMillan and Mr. McNeil. In this paper, which in a literary point of view is inferior to the Sanquhar Declaration, Mr. McMillan and Mr. McNeil declare their firm and unfaltering attachment to the standards of the Church of Scotland and lift up their testimony against the defections of the times in both church and state.

At this time, or soon after, Scotland became the scene of violent religious and political parties. The papal party were, by no means, favorable to the house of Hanover, from which, it was correctly judged, was to spring the future sovereigns of England. They were anxious that the race of Stuarts be restored, and hence they were the zealous but cautious friends



of the Pretender. The Episcopal clergy of Scotland, who, in immorality were not a whit behind the papal priests, threw the weight of their influence in favor of the Pretender, whom, in pitying accents, they styled "the lineal heir of our crown." These, under the cloak of the name Protestant, affirmed that the Protestant successor to the throne of England was as much of a papist as the Pretender, and he was a pagan besides. By them it was falsely asserted that he "communicated thrice a year with the Romish church and sacrificed to the devil."

The wise saw this fraud, but the unwary were deceived, and the Protestant succession was regarded with contempt by the unsuspecting. Staunch Protestants regarded these vile fabrications as a gross insult. Again John McMillan and John McNeil felt it their duty to take a more decided stand than they had done heretofore against papistry and prelacy.

At a general meeting of the Societies, at Crawford-John, in May, 1712, what they had previously done in advancing Reformation principles, was approved, and the 23d of July was appointed as the time for again making a public acknowledgment of sins and renewing the covenants. On the appointed day, the great mass of the Society People met at Auchinsaugh, near Douglass. Mr. McMillan began the work of the day with prayer for special assistance. After an exhortation by Mr. McMillan a sermon was preached by Mr. McNeil. On the next day Mr. McMillan preached, and read the acknowledgment of sins, which had been read on the previous day. Then followed the "engagement to duties."

These were solemn occasions. The people stood up, and with their right hands pointing to heaven, solemnly pledged themselves to be for God and not for another. Truth demands that we say that the Society People were equally opposed to both the house of Stuart and the house of Hanover. They would join neither party. This exposed them politically to the reproach of papists and Protestants.

Unfortunately, they lacked harmony among themselves. With all due deference to the memory of John McMillan, we are compelled to say that he was defective as an organizer. It is true that he had great difficulties to contend with. The people with whom he was associated were men and women who thought for themselves. It was impossible to drive them into



any measure, and it was no easy matter to lead them. Many of them were intellectually superior to both John McMillan and John McNeil. The Sanquhar Declaration demonstrates this assertion.

The great difficulty these Society People had to contend with, during the greater part of Mr. McMillan's life, was the fact that although they were Presbyterians of the strictest sort, they had no presbytery. John McNeil, so far as we have been able to discover, never was ordained. John McMillan was a frail man—so frail that he could not, for many years, dispense the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

To remedy these evils they labored diligently to restore harmony among themselves; but, unfortunately, without a presbytery this could not be effected. The removing of one difficulty generally introduced another.

That they might be enabled to organize a presbytery, they, or at least a portion of them, insisted that some of their own number should accept ordination at the hands of Mr. McMillan and the session, on the call of the people. Under the peculiar circumstances this, we suppose, would have been no violation of Presbyterian principles. Some things are lawful in a formative church which would not be in a church fully organized. In this, however, they could not, or did not, agree, and no one was ordained.

During this period in the history of the Established Church of Scotland, there were several ministers who, because of their opposition to the many innovations which were creeping into the church, were deposed from the exercise of their ministerial functions. Among these may be mentioned Adamson, McHenry, Taylor and Gilchrist. With these the Society People honestly attempted to form a union, and thus put the church in a working condition.

They also made a laudable effort to form a union with the "twelve Marrow men," or the twelve individuals who espoused and defended the doctrines of grace as stated in the work entitled the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*. In these praiseworthy efforts they were unsuccessful.

For a period of more than one-third of a century, John McMillan was the only ordained minister who had the moral



courage—rather should we not say the faith—to advocate publicly the principles held by the Society People.

John McMillan presents an example of moral heroism unexampled and unparalleled in the history of the world. Both he and the people among whom he labored were treated with disrespect—nay, with scorn and contempt—by both church and state. Notwithstanding this, they were a power in the land; and genuine Presbyterianism in every part of the world is gradually verging towards the high opinions held by these persecuted people.

The Rev. Thomas Nairn, a member of the Associate Presbytery, having adopted the sentiments of the Cameronians respecting civil government, became involved in a difficulty with the presbytery. The result was that Mr. Nairn renounced the authority of the Associate Church and joined the Cameronians.

On the 1st of August, 1743, John McMillan and Thomas Nairn met, and with the usual formalities constituted themselves into a presbytery which they called the REFORMED PRESBYTERY. It is true that Nairn, who seems to have been a restless spirit, left the Reformed Presbytery, which he had assisted in constituting, and returned to the Established Church of Scotland. In this case, as in every other, it is demonstrated that truth and right are not dependent upon men alone for their perpetuation, but upon the will of God.

The Reformed Presbytery, as we have seen, having been regularly organized in 1743, continues, with some slight modifications, unto this day. It never was strong in the popular sense of the word; neither did it ever show signs of rapid growth. This, no one at all acquainted with human nature and the doctrines and practices advocated by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, would expect. Its doctrinal standards were too high, and its practical requirements too rigid to be at all palatable to the mass of the human family. Notwithstanding all this, the Reformed Presbyterian Church has been, since its organization, a mighty power in the world. It stands among all other Christian denominations like a gnarled oak in a forest of dwarfed undergrowth.

The doctrines held by the Society People, both before their organization and after it, were those contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and in the Larger and the Shorter



Catechisms. In politics they were Republicans of the most ultra sect. They had suffered so much from Kings and Queens that they cherished a morbid hatred to monarchy in all its forms.

We cannot more clearly, and certainly not more truthfully, set forth the peculiar political views of the Reformed Presbyterians or Society People than by quoting their own language:

"The Presbytery testifies against and condemns that principle that the Christian people of God ought to give explicit acknowledgment of, and implicit subjection and obedience to, whatever civil authority (though most wicked and unlawful) the Lord, in his holy providence, may, for the trial and punishment of his church, permit a backsliding people to constitute and set up, without regard to the precepts of his word. And they hereby reject whatever, in opposition to the Church of Scotland, does justly and in its own nature imply, a voluntary and real acknowledgment of the lawfulness of the title and authority of an anti-scriptural, anti-covenanted and Erastian government, constituted upon the ruin of a scriptural, covenanted reformation."

So far as is positively known, the first Covenanters or "Society People" who came to America were those banished from Scotland in the year 1685. About two hundred were arrested and thrust into prison, because of their supposed connection with the invasion of the Duke of Argyle. After having suffered greatly in the places of their confinement, Dunnottar Castle and Bass-Rock, they, together with many others, were put on board a vessel ready to sail for New Jersey. They sailed from Leith, in the *Richard Hutton*, on the 5th of September, and arrived in New Jersey about the middle of December. The people of New Jersey, near the coast, mistaking them at first for banished convicts, treated them harshly. "A little way up the country there was a town where there was a minister settled, and the inhabitants there were very kind to them. When they had information of the prisoners' circumstances, they invited all who were able to travel to come and live with them, and sent horses for such as were not, and entertained them that winter freely and with much kindness."

These prisoners had been given to George Scot, Lord of Pitlochry, but Pitlochry died on the passage, and the prisoners fell into the hands of his son-in-law, Johnston.

In the spring of 1686, Johnston caused all the prisoners to be cited before a court of the province. The jury decided that these prisoners had bargained with Pitlochry, not Johnston,



“for money or service, and, therefore, according to the laws of the country they were *assoiled*.”

Some of these exiled covenanters remained in New Jersey; some went to New England; some of them to Pennsylvania; and some of them, in after years, to South Carolina.

The number of Covenanters in Scotland never was very large. They resided mainly in the shires of Ranark, Renfrew, Ayr, Dumbarton, Stirling, Nithsdale, and the Stewartries of Annandale, Wigton, Kirkcudbright, the Lothians, and Bathgate. After 1685, they began to emigrate to America, and their number in America soon became equal, or nearly equal, to that in Scotland. In America, as in Scotland, they organized societies; and although for a long time destitute of a minister, they preserved the forms of religion and adhered firmly to the reformation standards of the Church of Scotland.

These societies were scattered over a large tract of country, or rather, some of them were at a great distance from the rest. The larger number of them were, as well as can be ascertained at this late day, in Pennsylvania; but there were societies in several other States. In every community in which there were two or three families, they organized themselves into what was called a *society* or correspondence. These *societies* or correspondences all met together by representation annually or semi-annually, very much as a presbytery or synod. This was called the GENERAL MEETING. The first General Meeting of which, so far as is known, any record remains, was at Middle Octoraro, March 4, 1744. There were present fourteen delegates, representing seven societies. The Rev. Alexander Craighead was chosen President of this General Meeting.

The history of Mr. Craighead's connection with the “Society People” is involved in very considerable obscurity. It is not certain when nor where he was born. The probability is that he was born and educated in Ireland. It is generally supposed that he was the son of the Rev. Thomas Craighead. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Donegal (Presbyterian) on the 8th of October, 1734, and ordained and installed pastor of Middle Octoraro, on the 18th of November, 1735. He very soon became involved in a difficulty with some of his people and with some of the neighboring pastors. His difficulty with the latter was that he “carried the gospel to the people of New



London, in opposition to the wishes of the minister, the session and most of the congregation." Some of the people of his pastoral charge complained that he required them to adopt the Solemn League and Covenant when having their children baptized.

When he first began to insist upon the adoption of the Solemn League and Covenant is not certainly known; but it must have been very soon after his ordination, from the fact that in the latter part of 1740 he withdrew from the presbytery. His case came up before the synod in May 1741, and after several days, or parts of days, had been spent in considering it, the matter was finally lost sight of by a protest brought in by the Rev. Robert Cross.

It is probable that during all the time that his case was before the presbytery and synod, and even before this time, Mr. Craighead had been associated with the "Society People." The General Meeting of the societies to which reference has already been made, was certainly in the church of which he was pastor, and at least a respectable portion of his congregation held like views with himself. The evidence of this is the fact that his congregation is called the "Craighead Society," and sent two representatives, Robert Laughhead and Josiah Kerr.

Mr. Craighead entertained the peculiar views of the Society People concerning civil government. Those opinions were offensive both to the denomination with which he was connected and to the civil officers. In the language of Foote, "He was ahead of his ministerial brethren in Pennsylvania in his views of civil government and religious liberty." Some time previous to 1743, Mr. Craighead published a pamphlet, the nature of which is not now certainly known, but it certainly was exceedingly offensive to the civil authorities. Thomas Cookson, one of his majesty's justices of the peace for Lancaster county, in the name of the Governor, brought the subject matter of this pamphlet to the attention of the Synod of Philadelphia, at its meeting in the spring of 1743. The synod having suspended its regular business, gave its undivided attention to the consideration of this pamphlet. Mr. Craighead was not present. After due consideration, the synod "unanimously agreed that it (the pamphlet) was full of treason, sedi-



tion and distraction and grievous perverting of the sacred oracles to the ruin of all Societies and civil government, and directly and diametrically opposed to our religious principles, as we have, on all occasions openly and publicly declared to the world; and we hereby unanimously, with the greatest sincerity, declare that we detest this paper, and with it all principles and practices that tend to destroy the civil or religious rights of mankind, or to foment or encourage sedition or dissatisfaction with the civil government that we are now under, or rebellion, treason, or anything that is disloyal. And if Mr. Craighead be the author, we know nothing of the matter. And we declare that he hath been no member of our Society for some time past, nor do we acknowledge him as such."

It is most evident, from this declaration, that Mr. Craighead's pamphlet was of a political and not of a religious character. It is further evident that the Synod of Philadelphia was loyal to the crown, while Mr. Craighead, like the Covenanters, was disloyal and rebellious.

Although Mr. Craighead coöperated with the Covenanters, he never was a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The exact length of the period of his coöperation cannot be fixed with absolute certainty. Perhaps it was not more than ten years, and, actively, a much shorter time than that.

After leaving the Covenanters, he made application, as will be seen in the proper place, to the Anti-Burghers of Scotland.

The first Covenanter or Reformed Presbyterian minister who came to America was the Rev. John Cuthbertson, a native of Scotland. He was ordained to the full work of the gospel ministry some time previous to the year 1750, since at that time he was Moderator of the Reformed Presbyterian Presbytery. Very soon after this, probably the same year, he and Thomas Cameron were sent as missionaries by the presbytery to which they belonged to Ireland. This, so far as can be learned, is the date at which the Reformed Presbyterian Church began its missionary labors in Ireland. It is rather remarkable that John Cuthbertson should be the first Reformed Presbyterian missionary both to Ireland and America.

Mr. Cuthbertson landed in America on the 5th of August, 1751, and on the 9th of the same month, at the house of Joseph Ross, near the line that divides Pennsylvania from Maryland,



preached the first sermon ever preached in America by a Reformed Presbyterian minister. Previous to the arrival of Mr. Cuthbertson there were fifteen or twenty societies in eastern Pennsylvania. We have no means of ascertaining the exact number in any of the other States.

For a period of about twenty-three years Mr. Cuthbertson labored among the far-scattered societies of Reformed Presbyterians in America. The greater part of his preaching was done in private houses, but it is highly probable that even before his arrival some of the societies had erected houses of worship.

The labors, both physical and mental, of Mr. Cuthbertson during the first year of his residence in America, were simply marvelous. He preached one hundred and twenty days; rode on horseback over mountains and hills, often fording swollen creeks and deep rivers, nearly twenty-five hundred miles; baptized one hundred and ten children, and married ten couples. His public services at each one of his preaching stations generally consumed from four to five hours. On the 23d of August, 1752, he for the first time after coming to America, administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The exercises on this occasion consumed nine hours. Six or eight persons were, on examination, admitted to membership, and two hundred communed.

During the whole of the twenty-three years that Mr. Cuthbertson labored alone, his work, instead of decreasing in amount, increased; and instead of becoming lighter, became more burdensome.

It is proper to be mentioned in this place that while it has been said that the Rev. John Cuthbertson was the first Reformed Presbyterian minister who came to America, this is true only so far as well-authenticated and specific facts show. When, in 1685, the Covenanters landed in America, they were kindly received by a minister of the gospel who seems to have held similar views with themselves. Not only so, but in Connecticut, in 1759, Mr. Cuthbertson met with a Mr. Alexander McDowell, who, we are led to believe, was a Reformed Presbyterian minister. On several occasions Mr. McDowell preached for Mr. Cuthbertson, and assisted him in administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in October, 1761. More than



this: One of the Reformed Presbyterian congregations, probably Rock Creek, (now Gettysburg,) made out a call for Mr. McDowell. It is clear that both Mr. Cuthbertson and the lay members of the Reformed Presbytery held Christian communion with Mr. McDowell in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This, we suppose, they would not have done had Mr. McDowell not been a Reformed Presbyterian. Neither would they have invited him to become their pastor.

There is another fact in this connection which is worthy of note. When Mr. Cuthbertson, in 1759, went to Connecticut, he says he preached in a "meeting-house," implying that it was a Reformed Presbyterian Church. This house of worship was in Pelkham. About Mr. Alexander McDowell we know nothing more than the above fact, except that he lived east of the Connecticut river.

In addition to Mr. McDowell there was a Mr. McClelland, who frequently and at several places assisted Mr. Cuthbertson on sacramental occasions. Mr. Cuthbertson first mentions his name in connection with dispensing the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Octoraro, in April, 1766. Of this Mr. McClelland we know nothing further than that Mr. Cuthbertson not being altogether satisfied with him, he went to New England.

From the facts stated with regard to Messrs. McDowell and McClelland, we are safe in concluding that they both were either Reformed Presbyterians, or most positively in hearty sympathy with Reformed Presbyterians. At that time Reformed Presbyterians were not accustomed to hold either ministerial or Christian communion with any but Reformed Presbyterians, or those in avowed sympathy with Reformed Presbyterians.

Early in 1774, the Rev. John Cuthbertson was joined by the Revs. Matthew Linn and Alexander Dobbin, missionaries sent out by the Reformed Presbyterian presbytery of Ireland.

On the 9th of March, 1774, Messrs. Cuthbertson, Linn and Dobbin met at Paxton, Dauphin county, Pa., and took into consideration the propriety of organizing themselves into a presbytery. On the next day, the 10th of March, 1774, they again met, and in due form consummated the organization concerning which they had deliberated on the previous day.



During the year 1774 there were three meetings of the presbytery. The first, after its organization, was at Gettysburg, on the 23d and 24th of May. The next was at George Graham's, Pequa, on the 23d and 24th of November, and the third at Philadelphia on the 26th of November.

When, in 1782, the Associate Reformed Church was organized, there were only five Reformed Presbyterian ministers in America, viz: John Cuthbertson, Matthew Linn, Alexander Dobbin, William Martin and David Telfar. Mr. Martin was under suspension and did not go into the union. A minority of the people did not coalesce with the Associate Presbytery. These applied to the judicatories of the mother country and from them received ministerial aid. The fragments of the old congregations were gathered up and new ones organized, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church still has an existence in America.

In 1809, "The Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America" was constituted. About the year 1830, a controversy sprung up in the Synod as to whether or not the general principles held by the church in regard to civil government, applied to the Constitution of the United States. The result was that an unfortunate division took place in the church, in 1838 each claiming to be the true Reformed Presbyterian Church. The supreme judicatory of the one branch is denominated the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and of the other it is simply the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Of these two branches the General Synod is the weaker, but the difference in their strength is not great.



## CHAPTER VI.

ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY UNPOPULAR—A few Ministers in the National Church Friends of the Associate Presbytery—The Erskine Party Loosed from their Pastoral Relations—The Dominant Party Frightened—Acts of Assembly Annulled—Popular Movement—Assembly's Act in Reference to the Return of the Erskine Party—Synod of Perth and Stirling Restore the Seceders—Ebenezer Erskine Elected Moderator—People Desired the Secession Party to Return—Established Church—The Secession Party could not Return—Mr. Wilson Perplexed—Seceders Summoned before the Assembly—Appear as a Presbytery—Their Declinature—Action of the Assembly—Seceders Reluctantly Leave the Established Church—They Had no Alternative—Mr. John Hunter Licensed—Andrew Clarkson Licensed—Thomas Nairn Joins the Associate Presbytery—John Hunter Ordained—He Dies in 1740—James Thompson Joins the Associate Presbytery—James Mair and Adam Beugo Join the Associate Presbytery—They are Ordained Ministers in 1740—Growth of the Associate Presbytery—Strict Discipline—No Patronage—No Ruling Elders for four years—First Elders—Presbyterian Order—Theological Professor Chosen.

The Associate Presbytery, at the time of its organization, had but few friends among the ministers of the Established Church of Scotland. Among the lay-members it was far otherwise. It seems that error generally creeps into the visible church through the ministers, and reform is usually begun by the private members. A little learning makes some men mad. Very often, both in church and state, the voice of the people is the voice of God. The members of the Associate Presbytery were, for a number of years, very careful to avoid doing anything that might even, by their enemies, be regarded as revolutionary in its tendency, or even in appearance. It was reformation, not revolution, for which they contended. They desired no changes to be made in the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland, adopted in 1647.

It is cheerfully admitted that there were a few ministers in Scotland who regarded the action of the Commission and General Assembly toward Ebenezer Erskine and his coadjutors as irregular, unpresbyterial, tyrannical, unrighteous and shockingly wicked.



For a short time these intense sympathizers, but timid friends, of the Erskine party, checked the dominant party. An effort was made to restore the four seceding brethren to their former place and position in the Established Church. The action of both Commission and General Assembly by which they had been, in the language of that time, "loosed" from their pastoral charges, and declared no longer ministers of the National Church, was by the Assembly of 1734, declared to be inoperative.

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which met in May, 1734, was, in many respects, a very remarkable one. Considerable care had been taken in selecting delegates who were thought to be capable of doing right, and the number of heterodox members was less than usual, and far less bold and reckless. Only honest men are brave and fearless. Tyrants are all cowards. Such was demonstrated to be the case by the dominant party in the Established Church of Scotland at the period under consideration. By their tyrannical acts they had sown broadcast the seeds of disaffection, and now they tremble lest these seeds may spring up and produce an open rupture.

There is a period in every man's life when conscience awakes from its slumbers and pierces his soul as with a two-edged sword. Some time in the history of every human being, brought up in a Christian land, his sins will find him out, and the prospects of their dread consequences will fill his very bones with weakness.

For a period of about twenty years, the corrupt party in the Church of Scotland had been rushing on in a career of lawlessness and folly. Now (1734) they begin to tremble lest they have paved the way to their own destruction.

To avoid this dreaded calamity, several odious acts of previous Assemblies were repealed, and many of the acts and decisions of the Commission were in some cases reversed, and in others annulled.

A Commission was appointed to petition George II. for a repeal of the patronage act, and that ministerial freedom which had been by the Assembly of 1733 restrained towards the Revs. Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff and James Fisher, was now granted.



These were popular movements, designed to quiet the wide-extended dissatisfaction which tyrannical ecclesiastical legislation had produced. Manifestly, the General Assembly of 1734 was anxious to get the Seceders back, as the following act will abundantly show :

“The General Assembly, considering the great hurt and prejudice that hath at all times arisen, and must yet arise to the church, from divisions and animosities creeping in and taking root among the members thereof, notwithstanding their unanimity in sentiments upon material and fundamental points, which more nearly concern the promoting the interests of our blessed Lord and Saviour, the establishing the peace of the church and the advancement of practical godliness and true religion within the bounds of it, and particularly the lamentable consequences that have followed, and may yet follow, upon the separation of Messrs. Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff and James Fisher from this church and the judicatories thereof ; and judging it their duty to endeavor, by all just and proper means, consistent with the honor and glory of God, and the maintaining the peace and authority of the church, to restore harmony and brotherly love among all the members of it ; Therefore, the General Assembly, without further inquiring into the occasion or steps of proceeding, either on the part of the said brethren, or by the several judicatories under whose consideration the case hath been, which may have produced that unhappy separation, but resolving that all questions on these heads shall for hereafter be comfortably removed, have empowered, and hereby do empower, the Synod of Perth and Stirling, before whom the exceptions to some part of the conduct of two of these four reverend brethren were first taken and tried, upon such application made to them as they shall judge proper, to take the case of said four brethren, as it now stands, under their consideration, with full power to the said Synod to proceed and do therein as they shall find most justifiable and expedient for restoring the peace and preserving the authority of this church and restoring them to their respective charges. But with this express direction: that the Synod shall not take upon them to judge of the legality or formality of the former proceedings of the church judicatories in relation to this affair, either to approve of or condemn the same; but shall only, in virtue of the power and authority now delegated to them by the Assembly, proceed to take such steps for attaining the above ends for the future as they shall find just and tending to edification. And the Assembly do hereby appoint the aforesaid Synod to meet at Stirling upon the first Tuesday of July next, and from time to time name and appoint the place and diets of their after meetings on the said affair as they shall see cause, until the matter shall be ripened for a final conclusion; and recommend to them to use their utmost endeavors to bring the matter, as soon as reasonably can be, to a final and happy issue.”

This is a most wonderful enactment to be made by a grave and dignified and wise body of men as we are accustomed to think the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to be. It is difficult to understand by what motive, except fear, the Assembly was impelled, when it passed this act. It is unpresbyterian from beginning to end. The General Assembly of



1734 does not say that the General Assembly of 1733 did wrong by its commission in “loosing” from their pastoral charges Mr. Erskine and his three friends; but simply ordered the Synod of Perth and Stirling to restore them without inquiring into the “legality or formality” of any former proceedings in their case. This, the Assembly had no right, according to Presbyterian form of church government, to do. All that it could do was to say that the former proceedings in the case of Mr. Erskine were right or wrong. If they were right—that is, lawful—it was sinful in the Assembly to order them to be restored. If wrong, all that it had to do was to declare those proceedings null and void. This, without any further act, would have restored Mr. Erskine and his three friends.

It is manifest to any unprejudiced mind that it was not the design of the Assembly, in passing this act, to advance the glory of God and maintain the authority of the church.

A portion of the Assembly were thoroughly convinced that the Commission, in “loosing” the protesting brethren from their pastoral charges, perpetrated a great wrong and flagrant injustice. The anxiety of this portion of the Assembly to secure the restoration of the Secession party was so great that it failed to scrutinize closely into the mode proposed by the Assembly to reinstate them to their former standing. In order to attain a desired good, they suffered a wrong to be done. Those opposed to the Secession—and they were in the majority—seem to have been urged on by a fear that unless some act of clemency was passed, secession principles would be generally adopted and the number of Seceders rapidly multiplied. By the passage of the above-quoted act, it was thought the odium of secession would be cast upon the Seceders, and the tendency to secede effectually stopped.

Agreeably to the decree of the Assembly, the Synod of Perth and Stirling met on the 2d day of July, and “with one voice and consent took off the sentences pronounced by the Commission of the General Assembly of 1733 against the aforesaid four brethren, Messrs. Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff and James Fisher, declaring the same of no force or effect for the future; united and restored them to ministerial communion in this church, to their several charges, and to the exercise of all parts of the ministerial function



therein, as fully and freely as if there had never been act, sentence, obstacle or impediment whatsoever in the way thereof in time past; all which are hereby declared *sopite* and set aside for the future."

It is strange that the Synod of Perth and Stirling could be induced so to stultify themselves in the eyes of the world as to frame the above decision. It was this Synod that found Mr. Erskine censurable, because he had dared to intimate, in a sermon, that there were corruptions in the Church of Scotland. Mr. Erskine had retracted nothing that he had said in that sermon; but on all proper occasions was ready to repeat it.

To the contradictory actions of the Synod of Perth and Stirling there is an explanation. Every community is, to a very great extent, under the control of a few persons. The same is true of both civil governments and ecclesiastical courts. The tendency of every government is to degenerate into an aristocracy. The few control the many. Presbyterianism and ignorance are incompatible. It is capable of demonstration that the mass of the Established Church of Scotland, at the period of the secession, had only ill-defined notions of Bible Presbyterianism. A representative republic was a form of government that was but poorly understood at the time the Secession Church was organized. The Synod of Perth and Stirling thought they must obey the General Assembly, whether the Assembly obeyed God or not. The unscriptural notion that the highest judicatory of the Church could not do wrong, was firmly fixed in the minds of many, both of the people and ministers.

No doubt this notion led the Synod of Perth and Stirling to revoke all it had said and done concerning Mr. Erskine's Perth sermon; and it was led to find fault with that sermon because it was exceedingly unpalatable to the few who exercised dominion, or were striving for dominion over the rest.

But a short time after the Synod had "taken off" the sentence pronounced by the Commission of the General Assembly, the Presbytery of Stirling met and elected Mr. Ebenezer Erskine moderator. Mr. Erskine was not present, and as yet had not signified his intentions or designs in view of the late proceedings. A committee was appointed to wait upon him and inform him of the honor which had been conferred upon him.



At this late date we are scarcely able to come to a safe conclusion as to the motives which prompted the Presbytery of Stirling, at this time, to elect Mr. Erskine its moderator. It was certainly imprudent, hasty and uncalled for. Mr. Erskine, as he should have done under the circumstances, prudently but promptly declined the honor; but the presbytery, for some reason best known to themselves, saw fit to keep the chair vacant, avowedly for him.

- It appears that there was a general desire and expectation that the Seceders would return to the Established Church, and because they did not return, they were, at the time, severely censured, even by those who had before been their friends.

The misfortune of the Secession Fathers was that they were fully a century ahead of the age in which they lived. In the Church of Scotland, at the time of the secession, the majority of the ministers, although in every other respect orthodox, entertained mistaken notions concerning church government. With them the National Church was the true church, no matter what were its corruptions in doctrine and practice. In other words, they could not conceive of a church existing unless it was established by law. This being the case, whatever church was established by law, was, according to their mistaken notions, the true church, and all others were no churches.

Without saying so in words, they declared by their actions that they believed the General Assembly was infallible, and consequently it was sinful to protest against any of its acts, no matter how much these acts might clash with the Word and providence of God. Many of this class, perhaps the majority, were pious; but unfortunately the doctrine of a representative republic—Presbyterianism—was not understood by them, and the notion that church and state must be united was firmly fixed in their minds. With this class it was regarded a heinous sin for any one to offer a protest against anything that an ecclesiastical court might either do or say.

For protesting, the Fathers of the Secession were rebuked, silenced and excommunicated; and when the way was opened, as was thought, for their return to the Established Church and they did not avail themselves of it, this party, which heretofore had been their sympathizers, if not their friends, became their avowed enemies.



Besides the class spoken of above, there was another, which may, with the utmost propriety, be named Temporizers. Like the first class, this was the advocate of a National Church; but it made no sort of difference whether it was Prelatic or Presbyterian in its character. The former favored a Presbyterian establishment; the latter was indifferent as to the character of the establishment. All that it desired was an establishment favoring Protestantism rather than papacy. This class was ever ready to follow the multitude. In the proper sense they were time-servers. Peace and unanimity with them was everything, and purity and right nothing. By these time-servers good old Thomas Boston was prevented from protesting against the decision of the Assembly of 1729, in the case of Professor Simson; and they were the main instruments in producing all the ruptures which have taken place in the Church of Scotland.

Whoever will study carefully all the circumstances and facts connected with the Secession, will not be slow in concluding that the Secession party could not, without compromising themselves and sanctioning all the errors and corruptions of the Established Church, accept the offer made to them by the Synod of Perth and Stirling, in obedience to the command of the Assembly. It is manifest that either the Seceders were wrong, or the dominant party in the church was wrong. If the Seceders were wrong, then it would have been a sin on the part of the Established Church to have taken them back without first requiring them to acknowledge their past sins and exacting a profession of obedience for the future. If the dominant party was wrong, then it would have been a sin for the Seceders to have returned to the Established Church, unless the leaders of that church had confessed their sins and declared it to be their purpose to be faithful hereafter in the work of the Lord.

Mr. William Wilson was, for some time, perplexed as to his duty in reference to continuing the separation from the Established Church. The other three of the Secession Fathers seem never to have hesitated in their minds.

Because they did not accept the conditions proposed by the Assembly, they were, in 1739, individually summoned to answer a libel which the Commission, in obedience to the Assem-



bly, had framed. They appeared, not, however, as individuals, but as a regularly constituted presbytery. An Act of Declinature had been prepared by appointment of the Associate Presbytery, by Revs. Wilson, Moncreiff and Fisher. The Assembly met on the 10th of May. On the 17th, the Seceders were brought in by the officer. They were preceded by their moderator, Mr. Thomas Mair. Their entry produced very considerable stir. So soon as this had subsided, the moderator of the Assembly thus addressed them :

“ Although you are called here to answer to a libel, the Assembly is very loth to be obliged to proceed upon it; and if you offenders will now show a disposition to return to the duty and obedience you owe to this church, the Assembly is ready to forgive all that is past, and receive you with open arms.”

This the Assembly regarded as a conciliatory offer; but it is hard to discover anything very pacific in the language. To call a man an offender and require him to return to obedience, has something in it that is calculated to stir up a spirit of resentment. The point of difference was that the Seceders regarded the Assembly as offenders, and the Assembly, by its parleying with them, manifested a consciousness of guilt. This wrongly-named conciliatory offer having been made, Mr. Mair, the moderator of the Associate Presbytery, replied as follows :

“ We come here as a presbytery constituted in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of His Church ; and since I am at present the moderator of the presbytery, however insufficient for and unworthy of this trust, I am appointed as their mouth, to deliver their minds unto you by reading an act agreed upon by the presbytery.”

At this point the moderator of the Assembly immediately stopped him and called for the reading of the libel which the Commission of the Assembly had prepared. So soon as the reading of the libel was finished, Mr. Mair read the declinature of the Associate Presbytery and delivered it to the moderator of the Assembly. The Associate Presbytery then withdrew.

The Assembly ignored the declinature and appointed a committee “ to consider the process as it now stands, and to prepare an overture as to the Assembly’s further procedure therein.” The committee prepared a report, but the Assembly delayed final action until the 15th of May, 1740, at which time they were thrust out of the church.



Some may be ready to conclude that the Assembly showed great long-suffering towards the Secession Fathers, and that they exhibited great stubbornness.

We will not undertake to say that the Secession Fathers neither did nor said anything, during this parleying period of six years, that was wrong. No doubt they did many wrong things and gave utterance to many unguarded words. The majority of the ministers of the Church of Scotland regarded them schismatics and stigmatized those who adhered to them as stupid people; but the world is indebted to the Secession Fathers for many things. They had clearer and more accurately-defined notions of Presbyterianism than any of their contemporaries. When they seceded they appealed to the "first free, faithful and reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland." By a "free" Assembly, they meant an Assembly that was untrammelled by the State—an Assembly untainted with Erastianism. By a "faithful" Assembly, they meant an Assembly whose members were true to their ordination vows, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Bible; and by a "reforming" Assembly, they meant an Assembly that practiced Protestantism in opposition to Prelacy and Popery.

Those who have not studied the causes which led to the secession, and especially those who conclude that the multitude are always right and the minority wrong, have jumped to the grossly erroneous conclusions that the Seceders adopted a form of church government and a system of doctrine at variance with the Westminster Confession of Faith. In fact, there are many at the present day who regard those denominations which have sprung immediately from the Seceders as a kind of mongrel Presbyterians, who have framed a confession of faith and form of church government different in all its grand features from that prepared by the Westminster Assembly and adopted by the Church of Scotland. Nothing could be further from the truth. No conclusion could be more absurd. The Westminster Confession of Faith never had more zealous defenders than the first Seceders, and with the exception of that portion which treats of civil magistrates, it is dear to the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod of the South.

It may be well to mention, in this place, the fact that the Secession Fathers very reluctantly left the Established Church



of Scotland. Had there been manifested any signs of reformation on the part of the leaders of the Establishment, they would not have gone out of it; and after they made the secession, had the church which they loved dearly exhibited any signs of true and godly sorrow on account of past ecclesiastical sins, they would have gladly returned to the bosom of the church.

The simple, unvarnished truth is, the Secession Fathers were violently thrust out of the church of which they were bright examples of learning and piety, for no other reason than because they would not consent to follow the multitude to do evil. The General Assembly first attempted to awe them into an unscriptural submission. This they failed to accomplish. The Seceders had prayerfully deliberated before they acted. They were convinced that they were acting in conformity with the Scriptures. Such men cannot be awed into measures, neither by threats of violence nor by taunts of ridicule.

Having failed to frighten them into measures clearly at variance with both the word of God and the Westminster Confession of Faith, a cunningly-devised plan was arranged to lull the Seceders into silent subjection by a system of wheedling which would have done credit to a wily politician. This also failed. The Secession Fathers were neither cowards nor fools. They made an honest effort to know the right, and they had the moral courage to attempt to do right in the face of the world. Because they would not be awed into submission to ecclesiastical tyranny, nor beguiled into silent acquiescence in unconstitutional measures, they were angrily thrust out of the Church. So far as we have been able to discover, no effort was made by the Secession Fathers to alienate the minds of either the people or the ministers of the Church of Scotland. They made no attempt to proselyte. They did not persuade the congregations to which they had been ministering to leave the Established Church and join the secession. They continued to preach the gospel, and without any unscriptural effort on their part, their hands were in due time strengthened.

In February, 1737, the Rev. Thomas Mair, of Orwell, and the Rev. Ralph Erskine, of Dunfermline, joined the Associate Presbytery. From the beginning of the controversy which led to the secession, both these individuals had been the open and avowed friends of the protesters. They were present when the



Associate Presbytery was organized, and often after this met with them, consulted with them and prayed with them.

In December, 1737, Mr. John Hunter was licensed to preach the gospel. This was the first student of theology licensed by the Associate Presbytery. John Hunter and Andrew Clarkson had for some time been engaged in the study of theology under the Rev. William Wilson; but because of his Cameronian views, Andrew Clarkson was not, at this time, licensed. He afterwards satisfied the presbytery and was licensed.

In October, 1737, the Rev. Thomas Nairn withdrew from the Established Church and joined the secession. John Hunter having received a call from the congregations of Morebattle and Stitchell, to become their pastor, was, on the 17th of October, 1739, ordained and set apart to the full work of the ministry. In January, 1740, the wise Disposer of all things called him from time to eternity.

Some of the members of the Church of Scotland were foolish enough to say that the untimely death of their first licentiate indicated that God was frowning upon the Secession cause. Drowning men catch at straws. As well might the Jews have said that because Stephen was stoned to death, God was frowning upon the New Testament Church.

In June, 1738, the Rev. James Thomson, who had, for twenty years, been minister of the parish of Burntisland, gave in his adherence to the Associate Presbytery, and in July, 1739, the presbytery was strengthened by the accession of Gavin Beugo and James Mair, probationers of the Established Church.

The ordained ministers in connection with the Associate Presbytery, in May, 1740, when the sentence of excommunication was passed, were Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson Alexander Moncrieff, James Fisher, Ralph Erskine, Thomas Mair, Thomas Nairn and James Thomson. The probationers were Adam Gib, Andrew Clarkson, William Hutton, David Smyton, James Mair, Gavin Beugo and William Young. Two years afterward, the number of pastoral charges had increased to twenty, with a proportional increase in the number of probationers.

The early progress of the Associate Presbytery was very remarkable, when we take all the circumstances into consideration. There is no disguising the fact that the secession was,



with men of the world, exceedingly unpopular. The multitude, both in church and state, regarded the secession as an act just less than treason. Those who adhered to the Associate Presbytery had few friends among the great and influential in the state, and the dominant party in the Established Church were their avowed enemies. Not only this, but the ministers of the gospel who cast in their lot with the secession party deprived themselves of all state patronage, and placed themselves for a maintenance upon the contributions of a poor and despised people.

There are but few men who have the moral courage to do what the Secession Fathers did. The Established Church of Scotland embraced the mass of the Scotch people, and was regarded with a degree of veneration which approaches idolatry. The fact is, by the Scotch people generally, nobles and peasants, ministers and laymen, it was thought that the church and state were so intimately and so inseparably connected, that he who dared to protest against the actions of the General Assembly, committed a treasonable deed against the state.

It is no doubt proper, in this place, to notice the fact that for a period of four years, or from December 6, 1733, to January 5, 1737, there were no elders in the Associate Presbytery. The first lay elders who were enrolled as members of the presbytery were Thomas Watson and George Dron. During this interval the presbytery had met frequently and transacted some very important business. According to the principles of Presbyterianism, a presbytery is composed of all the pastors within a specified territory and a lay or ruling elder from each pastoral charge. In order to be a presbyter a preaching elder must be a pastor. In order that a lay elder may be entitled to act in a presbyterial capacity, he must be chosen for that purpose by the session of which he is a member. A presbytery cannot be lawfully constituted except a majority—more than one-half—of the pastors, and a majority of lay representatives from the pastoral charges embraced in the presbyterial bounds, be present. In the case of the Secession Fathers, the presbytery which they organized consisted of only preaching elders, for, as we have seen, a period of four years.

Although such was the case, the acts of the Associate Presbytery were not invalid; because, during that period they were



in a formative state. Everything must have a beginning. There was a time in the history of the congregations organized by the apostles, when they had no lay or ruling elders. In point of time, and in the order of Presbyterianism, the preacher or evangelist is first; then the congregation. The pastor and ruling elders are chosen by the people.

We must not omit to record the fact that shortly after its organization the Associate Presbytery turned their attention to educating young men for the ministry. They were at first unable to equip a theological seminary. This no one would have expected. They began their work at the beginning. They built upon the foundation laid by no man. In the spring of 1737 the presbytery appointed two of their number—Ebenezer Erskine and Alexander Moncrieff—to prepare an overture with reference to the very extensive calls made to them for supplying destitute portions of the kingdom with the preached gospel. After due deliberation, the following conclusion was reached:

“Therefore, (in view of the great destitution,) the committee are of opinion that this presbytery should make some step toward the relief of the Lord’s oppressed heritage, especially considering the loud call in Providence thereto, by nominating and appointing one of their number to take the inspection of the youth that should offer themselves to be trained up for the holy ministry, and also that every one of the brethren should carefully look out for faithful men to whom the ministry should be committed.”

The matter was so urgent that the presbytery proceeded at once to the choice of a theological professor. The Rev. William Wilson, of Perth, was chosen by the unanimous voice of the presbytery.

For this very responsible position Mr. Wilson was, according to the testimony of both the friends and enemies of the secession, eminently qualified. He was a graduate of the University of Glasgow; a man of good family; of good natural abilities, well developed by a course of intense study, which had been kept up since his early boyhood; and besides all this, he was a man of exemplary piety, loved and respected by all who knew him.



## CHAPTER VII.

IMPORTANT FACTS CONNECTED WITH THE HISTORY OF ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY—Associate Synod Organized—Burgess Oath—Controversy Respecting Nairn Difficulty—Nairn Joins Cameronians—Returns to the National Church—Design of the Burgess Oath—American Government—Cameronians and Seceders Quarrel—Division in the Associate Synod—Anti-Burghers and Burghers—Number of Anti-Burghers—Of Burghers—Reunion and Formation of the United Associate Synod—Number of Ministers—Union of Secession Synod of Ireland and Synod of Ulster—Union of the United Secession and Relief Synod—Formation of the *United Presbyterian Church*—Strength of the United Presbyterian Church—Growth of the Associate Church—Its Missionary Character—Call for Laborers from Ireland—First Ministers sent to America—Rev. Gilbert Tennant—Rev. John Moorhead—Organization of the Presbyterian Church in America—Nativity of its Ministers—Congregational Element—Old Side and New Side—Journal of Whitfield—Belfast Society—First Petition for Preaching in America by Seceders—Alexander Craighead—Organization of the Synod of Philadelphia—Adopting Act—Misunderstanding Concerning.

With the previous chapter we might conclude the history of the Associate Presbytery; but some of its subsequent acts are of too great importance to be passed over in silence, and they have at least a remote connection with the early history of the Associate Reformed Church.

No sooner, as we have seen, was the Associate Presbytery organized than it began to grow. In fact, notwithstanding it met with the determined opposition of the majority of the ministers of the Established Church, it flourished beyond the most sanguine expectations of its actual members and outside friends. In October, 1744, the number of ordained ministers having increased to twenty-six, the Associate Synod was organized and three presbyteries were formed, viz: Presbytery of Dunfermline, Presbytery of Glasgow and Presbytery of Edinburgh. The membership increased much more rapidly than the number of the ministers.

The first Tuesday of March, 1745, was named as the day for the first meeting of the Associate Synod, and Stirling as the place at which it should convene. In the "*New Church*"—the church built for the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine—at the time



and place appointed, the Synod met, and after being constituted with prayer by the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, the Rev. Ralph Erskine was chosen moderator, and John Reid was appointed clerk. Several important matters came up for consideration by the Synod, but the most important was an overture sent up by the presbytery of Dunfermline. The importance of this overture consisted not in its intrinsic merit—although this was not small—but to the grave results to which it, in a very short period, led. The following is the overture:

“That the Synod take under their consideration whether or not the Burgess oath be agreeable to the word of God and to the received principles of this church founded thereupon, and particularly to those in the Judicial Act and Testimony emitted by the Associate Presbytery in the Act relating to Mr. Nairn’s affair, and in the Act concerning the renovation of our covenants.”

The Rev. Thomas Nairn, whose name appears in the above-quoted overture, was, at the time of the secession, pastor of Abbottshall. In the latter part of 1737, he joined the Associate Presbytery and appeared to be in full sympathy with it. At the meeting of the presbytery, in October, 1742, it was agreed to make preparation for renewing the covenants. At the same time that the covenants were renewed, it was customary with the Church of Scotland, and all others following her example, to make an acknowledgment of sins. Mr. Nairn dissented from the paragraph in the acknowledgment of sin which specified the resisting civil officers and propagating the gospel by offensive arms, as one of the sins advocated and practiced by some persons. It is probable that in this paragraph reference was made to the Cameronians. Mr. Nairn either had adopted the sentiments of these good people—but perhaps extremists in their notions of civil government—or at least he pretended to have adopted their sentiments. The latter appears more probable; for having renounced his connection with the Associate Presbytery, he joined the Cameronians, but soon left them and sought shelter in the National Church. After making a humiliating confession of his sin and folly in seceding from the National Church, he was again taken into its bosom.

The objectionable feature in the proposed acknowledgment of sins was expunged, but Mr. Nairn had said some things during the debate which it occasioned, that the presbytery re-



garded as subversive of all civil government. These declarations he was required by the presbytery to retract, or process would be entered against him. His conscience, he intimated, would not allow him to do this. Such being the case, and the presbytery being determined in its course, Mr. Nairn renounced the authority of the presbytery, and as the first seceders had done before him, appealed to the first faithful reforming ecclesiastical court.

The unfortunate affair which we are about to mention had its origin in a condition of things that never had an existence in America, and, consequently, cannot be well appreciated by Americans. It paved the way for two results much to be regretted. One of these results was the arraying of the Seceders and Cameronians against each other in bitter, and, we may add, avowed hostility. The other was a rent in the secession.

Mr. Andrew Clarkson, who had been in connection with the Cameronians, joined the Associate Presbytery in 1737. He had finished his theological course of studies several years before this period, but because these people had no ecclesiastical organization, had not been licensed to preach. He was, after due deliberation and much caution, licensed by the Associate Presbytery to make trial of his gifts as a minister of the gospel.

The Cameronians, or "Hill folk," denounced Mr. Clarkson after this as a vile backslider, and the Seceders applied the same opprobrious epithet to Mr. Nairn. The breach between the Associates and Cameronians was thus widened and deepened, and remains in part unto this day. This was greatly to be deplored, but the division which took place in the Associate Presbytery was to be more regretted.

That an American may understand the cause of this division, he must acquaint himself with a state of things which, in the good providence of God, he has never been called to experience. Americans enjoy a degree of religious freedom which no nation except God's ancient people, the Jews, ever enjoyed. In our favored land every man is guaranteed the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and no one dare molest him in the enjoyment of this right. All the restraint that is put upon him is that he must not infringe upon the rights of others.



In Scotland, at the time of the secession, the sovereign of England was, in a limited but practical sense, the head of the Church of Scotland. Without the presence of the King's commissioner the General Assembly could not be lawfully convened, and the withdrawal of this royal commissioner was sufficient cause for its being dissolved. In the Church of Scotland, Jesus Christ was theoretically the king and head of the church ; in its government, however, the headship of the church was practically divided between Jesus and the Sovereign of Great Britain.

From this unscriptural practice, both the Cameronians and the Seceders dissented. In part, at least, it constrained the Cameronians to stand aloof from the Established Church, when, in 1688, it was reorganized ; and on account of it, in part, the Seceders severed their connection with the same church. Both were jealous of what they conceived to be the crown rights of Jesus Christ. As was natural, they sometimes did not agree among themselves. The Seceders regarded the Cameronians as ultra in their notions in respect to civil government ; and on the contrary, the Cameronians regarded the Seceders as latitudinarian in their notions concerning the rights and prerogatives of civil magistrates.

The consequences of this diversity of opinion between the Seceders and Cameronians respecting the extent of the powers of civil magistrates, was surely bad enough ; but it was much worse when diversity of opinion on this same subject sprung up among the Seceders themselves. A war between strangers is a great calamity, and earnestly to be deprecated by every right-minded man ; but what language is sufficient even faintly to depict the field made crimson by a brother's blood shed by a brother's hand ? All quarrels are morally ugly things ; but nothing can be more revolting, or more to be deplored, than a family broil.

Such a broil was begun by the members of the Secession Synod, in March, 1745, at Stirling—its first meeting—and continued with much warmth for a period of two years, and finally resulted in the division of the Synod into Burghers and Anti-Burghers.

The dispute was about the consistency of the members of the Secession Church taking a clause in a certain oath.



The object for which this oath seems to have been framed, when viewed with an unprejudiced eye, was to prevent Roman Catholics from becoming citizens of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Perth, and other royal towns.

Since these places were burghs or boroughs, the citizens were called burghers or burgesses, and the oath which caused so much disturbance in the Secession Church was called the Burgher oath. The following is the clause about which the controversy arose: "Here I protest before God and your lordship that I profess and allow with my heart, the true religion presently professed within this realm, and authorized by the laws thereof; I shall abide thereat and defend the same unto my life's end; renouncing the Roman religion called Papistry."

The parties disagreed respecting the meaning of the words, "the true religion presently professed within this realm and authorized by the laws thereof." One part claimed that these words meant the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, from which they had lately withdrawn, and to swear the King's oath was to stultify themselves and abandon their testimony. The other party claimed that by "the true religion presently professed within this realm" was meant the Presbyterian Church without its corruptions, and as opposed to Papistry. This party was opposed to the Synod's saying, by a judicial act, that the taking of this oath was a transgression of law and order worthy of excommunication. The other party pleaded that there should be neither ministerial nor Christian communion with those who should take it.

The difference, at first small, grew rapidly, and in the short space of two years assumed huge proportions.

The debates were many and fierce, and those who had but a short time ago stood side by side in opposing the corruptions of the Established Church, now became as warmly opposed to each other.

On the 9th of April the Synod was rent in twain. That part which was opposed to taking the Burgher oath organized themselves on the following day into a Synod which they called the General Associate Synod, generally known as Anti-Burghers.

The other part retained the original name, Associate Synod, but in ecclesiastical history they are generally called Burghers.

At the time this rupture took place the Secession Church



numbered thirty-three ministers, nineteen of whom espoused the Anti-Burgher side of the question, and fourteen the Burgher side.

No doubt the enemies of the secession—and they were not few—now concluded that it would not be long before the Seceders would return to the National Church, confess their sins, be rebuked, and received back as prodigal sons into the bosom of the church. Such, however, was not the case. For a period of seventy-three years they remained separate organizations. At half past twelve o'clock, on Friday, the 8th of September, 1820, the two Synods met in Bristo-street Church and united into one body, which they appropriately named THE UNITED ASSOCIATE SYNOD OF THE SECESSION CHURCH.

At this time there were in connection with the Burgher Synod one hundred and thirty-nine ministers, and in connection with the Anti-Burgher Synod one hundred and twenty-three. On the 8th of April, 1840, the Secession Synod of Ireland and the Synod of Ulster united and formed *The Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, and on the 13th of May, 1847, a union was consummated in Edinburgh between the United Secession Synod and the Relief Synod, forming what is known as *The United Presbyterian Church*.

In less than one hundred years the Associate Presbytery grew from one small Presbytery of four members to twenty-two Presbyteries, having under their care three hundred and sixty-one congregations, one hundred and twenty-six thousand communicants, and a population of nearly three hundred thousand. This does not include those in America, who adhered to the principles and practices of the Secession Fathers. When the union which formed the United Presbyterian Church was consummated, the united body had the oversight of five hundred and four congregations, which were divided into twenty-eight presbyteries. Sixty of these congregations were in England, and four hundred and forty-four in Scotland. This growth, although not so rapid as has been experienced by some other denominations of Christians, still, when everything is considered, it is a most marvelous increase.

It is a fact universally admitted that Seceders have ever been regarded as austere in their manners, and rigidly strict in their discipline. However much time and circumstances have ef-



fecting in removing their austerity of manners and lowering their standard of discipline, it is a fact well attested that there was a time in the past history of Secederism when it was no easy matter to be admitted into full membership in the Seceder Church; and it was by no means difficult to lose it when once obtained. Not only so, but the doctrines taught and insisted upon by the Associate Presbytery were at that time unpopular and ever will be unpopular with the mass of mankind. In no branch of the church, which, directly or indirectly, in part or in whole, is descended from the Associate Presbytery, is there anything that is calculated to captivate by its glare the multitude. The character of the pulpit exercises, and all the forms of private and public worship are at the farthest remove from everything that savors of form.

We are not, however, to conclude that the Associate Church grew as by miracle, without any effort on the part of those who adopted its principles and practices. No denomination of Christians did more missionary work. No ministers of the gospel since the days of Paul, could, with more propriety, adopt his language and say they had "striven in all things to commend themselves as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings and in fastings," than the ministers of the Secession Church.

The first sound that greeted their ears after their organization into a presbytery, was the Macedonian entreaty, "Come over and help us!" From its very beginning, the Associate Presbytery engaged in stupendous missionary labors. In the providence of God they were forced to engage in missionary labors to an extent without a parallel in the history of Presbyterianism before or since. In the year 1737, application was made to the presbytery by twenty-three societies to be taken under their care and supplied with the public means of grace. During the next year, by forty-eight societies. As early as 1736, a number of families in Lisburn, Ireland, requested that some one would be sent by the Presbytery to labor among them.

It is, however, with the mission labors of the Associate Presbytery in America that we are more interested. With eminent propriety and exact truthfulness, it may be said that



the Associate Reformed Church is the result of missionary labors begun and carried on by the Associate and Reformed Presbyteries of Scotland and Ireland.

The first ministers sent to America by the Secession Church was in 1753. This was after the division into Burghers and Anti-Burghers. Long before this, however, petitions had been addressed to the presbytery by persons residing in Pennsylvania. The first formal correspondence, so far as we have been able to discover, between persons in America and the Associate Presbytery, was in 1738. On the 20th of June of that year, the Rev. Gilbert Tennant, by the direction of the members of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, wrote a letter to the Associate Presbytery, in which the New Brunswick Presbytery "signified its hearty approbations of the seceding ministers." This letter was laid before the Associate Presbytery in August of the same year. About the same time, the Rev. Ralph Erskine received a letter from the Rev. Muirhead (or Moorhead) pastor of the "Church of Presbyterian Strangers," in Boston. The following very remarkable sentences occur in Mr. Moorehead's letter:

"Go on, blessed champions, in the cause of God. Your trials are not greater than those of Zinzendorf, Whitfield, Tennant, and the poor, unworthy instrument that is now writing to you. We must have thorns lest we be exalted above measure. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. The more of this if submitted to with gospel meekness, our crown, though sullied here by rebels to God and their own good, will shine the brighter through eternity."

It may appear strange that Gilbert Tennant and John Moorhead should, at so early a period, open a correspondence with the Associate Presbytery. When the facts are all known, this strangeness vanishes away.

The Presbyterian Church was organized in America perhaps in the latter part of 1705 or early part of 1706. The organization was given the name of "Presbytery of Philadelphia." Four of its seven members were from Ireland, two from Scotland, and one a native of New England. In 1716 the denomination had so increased that it was deemed advisable to organize four other Presbyteries, viz: The Presbytery of Philadelphia, the Presbytery of New Castle, the Presbytery of Snow Hill, and the Presbytery of Long Island. At the same time these four Presbyteries were constituted into a Synod, called



the Synod of Philadelphia. Not long before this time a number of congregations, with their pastors, in the Jerseys and Long Island, had connected themselves with the Presbyterian Church. These congregations were originally Congregationalists, and although they formally connected themselves with the Presbyterian Church, they, at least in part, retained their congregational notions on some important points. By them the numerical strength of the Presbyterian denomination in America was increased, but its harmony and peace were greatly disturbed. It was not long until there were two conflicting parties in the church. One was called the "Old Side," and the other the "New Side." It is true that the Congregational element had little to do with the controversies engaged in between the "Old Side" and the "New Side" parties. It was, however, the little leaven which, in 1837, had permeated nearly one-half of the whole denomination.

The "Old Side" and the "New Side" controversy was mainly about "subscribing," as it was called, the Westminster Confession of Faith; not as a whole, but particularly with reference to the ordination of ministers. It is possible, nay it is highly probable, that the parties did not clearly understand each other. The "New Side" party charged the "Old Side" with rigidly requiring a candidate for ordination to subscribe the whole of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the chapters on civil government included. The "Old Side" party was also charged with requiring the candidate for ordination to be thoroughly educated, but at the same time they manifested a culpable indifference with regard to his piety. The "Old Side" party charged the "New Side" with having little respect to the candidate's intellectual and educational qualifications, provided he was pious.

This was the beginning of the controversy; but soon other things were dragged into it, and that which at first was a mere speck in the horizon, became a black and angry cloud, which, in the language of the Rev. Robert Cross, "endangered the very existence of the infant church."

Previous to the year 1700 there were, in all the territory now embraced in the United States, not more than twenty Presbyterian ministers, and all of these, except six, were in the New England States. In New England Congregationalism



then as now prevailed, and gave shape and coloring to everything. Several of the Presbyterian preachers seem to have had no immediate connection with any presbytery. This was the case in Charleston, South Carolina. In the "White Meeting House," Presbyterians of English, Irish and Scotch descent, and New England and Old England Congregationalists, worshipped together in harmony and peace, having for twenty years a minister of the Church of Scotland.

Facts warrant the conclusion that the Presbyterian Church in the United States had its origin in a blending of Irish Presbyterianism and English Congregationalists, together with a slight mixture of Scotch Presbyterians. In, perhaps, all the American colonies there were, at this time, a very considerable number of the population who adhered to the more rigid features of the Church of Scotland, and in several of the colonies there were a few who embraced, with all their hearts, the political and religious notions held by Cameron, Cargill and Renwick. To both of these classes the manner in which the Presbyterian Church was organized in America was not agreeable, and very soon afterward they began to look with anxious hopes for relief by means of the party in the Church of Scotland, which was protesting against the patronage system. In fact, a very respectable number of persons, in full sympathy with the secession doctrine, had come to America several years before the secession actually took place. Soon after the secession was accomplished, a number of families in connection with the Associate Presbytery, both in Scotland and Ireland, came to America. Some of these families settled in South Carolina, some in North Carolina, some in Virginia, some in several of the New England States; but, perhaps, the greater part of them fixed their abode in Pennsylvania. Between these families and their friends in Ireland and Scotland, a correspondence was kept up, so that in this private way those in America were informed of what was transpiring, both in Church and State, in the mother country, and those in Ireland and Scotland gained similar information respecting affairs in America.

In 1739, the celebrated preacher, George Whitfield, made the following entry in his journal respecting the elder William Tennant:



"He keeps an academy about twenty miles from Philadelphia and has been blessed with four gracious sons, three of which have been, and still continue to be, eminently useful in the Church of Christ. \* \* \* He is a great friend of Mr. Erskine, of Scotland, and as far as I can learn, both he and his sons are secretly despised by the generality of the synod (Philadelphia) as Mr. Erskine and his friends are hated by the judicatories of Edinburgh."

It is a well-attested fact that Arianism, about the time that the Associate Presbytery was organized, began to crop out in the Synod of Ulster, Ireland. In 1705, the BELFAST SOCIETY was organized. Its acknowledged leaders were the Revs. John Abernethy and James Kirkpatrick, both of whom had been fellow students with the Rev. John Simson, professor of divinity in the University of Glasgow. John Abernethy was a man of fine attainments, of unbounded ambition, and every way qualified to be the leader of a party setting forth strange and anti-Presbyterian doctrines and practices. This Arian party continued to exercise very considerable influence in the Church of Ireland for a period of more than one hundred years. The final contest was made in 1829, in which struggle Dr. Cook was the leader of the orthodox party, and the Rev. Henry Montgomery of the Arians. The Church of God was disturbed by these errorists in England, Ireland, Scotland and America, and by them good men, such as John Wesley, Ebenezer Erskine, the Tennants—father and sons—John Moorhead and Alexander Craighead, "were secretly hated." There is little doubt but Arianism and anti-Presbyterian notions had much to do in originating and keeping up the correspondence between the Associate Presbytery and William Tennant and John Moorhead.

In nearly every one of the thirteen American colonies there were a few persons who were ready to affiliate with the Associate Presbytery so soon as it was organized. The first formal request that the Associate Presbytery received from persons in America for the preaching of the gospel, was in 1742. The probability is that this petition was presented in the early part of the year, and that it had been prepared in 1741. It came from persons in Chester county, Pennsylvania. As an evidence of their earnestness, they "request the Presbytery to send them either an ordained minister or a probationer." They also promise "to defray all the necessary charges of the mission." This was only about seven years after the organization



of the Associate Presbytery, and only two years after the secession ministers were thrust out of the Church of Scotland. The demands made upon the Presbytery from various portions of Ireland and Scotland were many, and so pressing that the petition from America could not be granted. All that the Presbytery could at this time do was "to write a friendly letter to their friends beyond the Atlantic."

It is probable that a correspondence was kept up regularly with the people of Londonderry, Chester county, Pa., but the next application "for sermon" was in 1751.

It is rather remarkable that this application should be made by the Rev. Alexander Craighead, a member of the Synod of Philadelphia, and afterwards pastor of Sugar Creek congregation, in Mecklenburg county, N. C. The explanation is the fact that Mr. Craighead and a number of other ministers in the Presbyterian Church in America were dissatisfied with many things connected with the Presbyterian Church of America. Whether this dissatisfaction was well founded or not, is a matter with which we are not at present further concerned than to account for the correspondence, which sprung up between the Associate Presbytery of Scotland and several individuals in connection with the Presbyterian Church in America.

The early history of what is now known as the Presbyterian Church in America is involved in very great obscurity. The exact date of the arrival of the first Presbyterian minister is not certainly known. Previous to 1700 there were but few organized congregations, and only a few ministers. These were scattered over an immense tract of country from Charleston, S. C., to Boston, Mass. The Presbytery of Philadelphia was, as has been elsewhere stated, organized either in the early part of the year 1706, or in the latter part of 1705. In 1716 the Presbytery of Philadelphia having increased greatly in numbers, it was determined to divide it into four presbyteries, and these to form the Synod of Philadelphia.

At the meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia, in 1729, what was called the "Adopting Act" was passed. This act, or parts of it, gave great offense to some persons. One party in the church regarded it, or at least one clause or expression in it, as too loose, and another party looked upon the general tenor of the act as demanding too much.



It is most evident that at that period, and for several years previous, there was much diversity of opinion among the Presbyterians respecting the Westminster Confession of Faith. This was natural, and to be expected, from the character and circumstances of the persons forming the organization. Some were Scotch, some Irish, some Welsh, some English, and some were from the continent of Europe. There was a very great similarity in their modes of worship and formulas of doctrine. Still they were in many things very dissimilar. They were generally Calvinists and nearly all Presbyterians. Still English Presbyterianism differed as much from Scotch Presbyterianism as either did from Episcopacy. The larger number of Puritans who settled New England were English Presbyterians, yet so much did they differ from Scotch Presbyterians, that the Puritans have all been regarded as Congregationalists.

In an organization composed of materials so much alike, and yet so unlike, perfect harmony could not at first be expected.

At the meeting of the Synod, in 1728, an overture was presented in writing having reference to the subscribing of the Confession of Faith. On the second day of the meeting of the Synod, in 1729, a committee was appointed "to draw up an overture upon" this overture. This committee reported on the next day. "After long debating" this "overture of the committee was adopted." There is no denying the fact that the adoption of this overture was offensive to many in the denomination. The following is the overture:

"Although the Synod do not claim or pretend to any authority of imposing our faith upon other men's consciences, but do profess our just dissatisfaction with, and abhorrence of such impositions, and do utterly disclaim all legislative power, and authority in the church, being willing to receive one another as Christ has received us, to the glory of God, and admit to fellowship, in sacred ordinances, all such as we have grounds to believe Christ will at last admit to the Kingdom of Heaven, yet we are undoubtedly obliged to take care, that the faith once delivered to the saints be kept pure and uncorrupt among us, and so handed down to our posterity; and do therefore agree that all the ministers of this Synod, or that shall hereafter be admitted into this Synod, shall declare their agreement in, and approbation of, the Confession of Faith, with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, as being in all the essential and necessary articles, good forms of sound words and systems of Christian doctrines, and do also adopt the said Confession and Catechisms as the confession, of our faith. And we do also agree that all the presbyteries



within our bounds shall always take care not to admit any candidate of the ministry into the exercise of the sacred function but what declares his agreement in opinion with all the essential and necessary articles of said Confession, either by subscribing the said Confession of Faith and Catechisms, or by verbal declaration of their assent thereto as such minister or candidate shall think best. And in case any minister of this Synod, or any candidate for the ministry, shall have any scruples with respect to any article or articles of said Confession or Catechisms, he shall, at the time of his making said declarations, declare his sentiments to the presbytery or synod, who shall, notwithstanding, admit him to the exercise of the ministry within our bounds, and to ministerial communion, if the synod or presbytery shall judge his scruples or mistake to be only about articles not essential and necessary in doctrine, worship or government. But if the synod or presbytery shall judge such ministers or candidates erroneous in essential and necessary articles of faith, the synod or presbytery shall declare them incapable of communion with them. And the Synod do solemnly agree that none of us will traduce or use any opprobrious terms of those that differ from us in these extra-essential and not necessary points of doctrine, but treat them with the same friendship, kindness and brotherly love as if they had not differed from us in such sentiments."

It is most manifest that this overture, which was agreed upon by the Synod of Philadelphia in the very words above cited, and is usually called "The Adopting Act," was an attempt at a compromise between parties entertaining conflicting opinions with respect to the doctrines and form of church government contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

By the passage of this overture, the strict Presbyterian party claimed a victory; but really it is difficult to see in what this victory consisted. It, together with other enactments, led to a rupture, in 1741; and the division of the Presbyterian Church into Old School and New School, in 1837, may be traced back to this Adopting Act of 1729.

These unfortunate misunderstandings among the members of the Presbyterian Church in America led directly to a correspondence between some of the dissatisfied parties and the Associate Presbytery of Scotland. Notwithstanding all this, when the Associate Presbytery sent missionaries to America, they, as we shall see, were not received by either party with even the social courtesies which are shown by one gentleman to another.



## CHAPTER VIII.

GELLATLY AND ARNOT COME TO AMERICA—Their Instructions—Seceder Societies—Hume and Jamieson Appointed to go to America—Andrew Bunyan deprived of his License—Good Effect—Condition of America in 1751—Bunyan Restored—Apostolic plan, “by two and two”—Gellatly and Arnot Solicited to join the Presbyterian Church—Stigmatized as Schismatics—Warning Published—Delop’s Pamphlet—Controversy about the Nature of Faith and the Gospel Offer—Ralph Erskine’s View—Finley and Smith and Gellatly and Arnot Controversy—Mr. Gellatly Settles as Pastor—Arnot Returns to Scotland—James Proudfoot Arrives in America—Settles at Pequa—Removes to Salem—Mission Station of Associate Synod—Matthew Henderson Comes to America—Settles at Oxford—John Mason, Robert Annan and John Smart Come to America—Mason Settles in New York; Annan at Marsh Creek—Smart Returns to Scotland—William Marshall Comes to America—Receives Three Calls—Occasions a Difficulty in the Presbytery—Mr. Henderson Dissents—Mr. Marshall Settles at Deep Run.

The first Associate ministers who came to America were the Revs. Alexander Gellatly and Andrew Arnot, both in connection with the Anti-Burgher Synod of Scotland. They set sail for America in the beginning of the summer of 1753, and arrived in Pennsylvania sometime before the close of the same year. According to the instruction given them by the judicatory to which they belonged, they immediately on arriving in the New World, proceeded to organize themselves into a presbytery. The tenor of these instructions was that they, together with two ruling elders, should constitute themselves into a presbytery under the title of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and that as soon as practicable, they should organize two congregations, each having its own bench of ruling elders. They were further instructed not to admit any to the office of ruling elder who had not examined and approved the standards of the Secession Church, and who did not possess the scriptural qualifications for that sacred office.

Although, so far as is known, there is no record to show that previous to the arrival of Messrs. Gellatly and Arnot, there were in America any ruling elders in connection with the Secession Church of Scotland, it is very probable there were sev-



eral. The Seceders, like the Covenanters, formed themselves into societies so soon as they came to America. These societies generally, if not always, were under the supervision of a ruling elder. Not only so, but these societies were, like the Scotch congregations, divided into "quarters," or, more correctly, into sections, and a quarter or section assigned to each ruling elder. Over his quarter a ruling elder exercised a general supervision, and performed much that is now denominated pastoral duty. He visited the sick, catechised and instructed the children, comforted the afflicted, rebuked transgressors, and usually directed the public religious exercises of his quarter on the Sabbath. The persons who, in 1742, sent up the first formal petition to the Secession Church for preaching, seem to have been organized into a society, and were in good working condition. In other words, they seem to have had an energetic leader, in whom all had confidence. This is the more probable, since they, in their petition, declare their readiness to defray the expenses of the mission.

Previous to the appointment of Messrs. Gellatly and Arnot as missionaries to America, the Secession Church had made several unsuccessful efforts to meet the urgent demands made upon it by the societies in the new world.

At the meeting of the Anti-Burgher Synod, in August, 1751, the Secession Presbytery of Ireland was directed to ordain Mr. James Hume, with a view to his being sent to America as a missionary. At the same time, the Presbytery of Perth and Dunfermline was instructed to license Mr. John Jamieson, that he might be ready, at the next meeting of Synod, to be sent to the same field, if the way should then be open. Mr. Hume, who was obstinately opposed to undertaking the work assigned him by the Synod, was dealt with in a very positive manner. Some time after his appointment as missionary to America, he received a call from the congregation of Moyrah and Lisburn, Ireland; but the Synod refused to sustain the call, and ordered him to proceed to fulfill his appointment in America. Notwithstanding this, he still persisted, and the Synod finally concluded to grant his presbytery permission to settle him. This was done, but not until he had made satisfactory acknowledgment for his previous obstinacy. Mr. Jamieson received a call from Duke Street congregation, in the city of Glasgow, and



was, by the permission of Synod, settled over them as their pastor. Mr. Jamieson, also, was unwilling to undertake the American mission; but his unwillingness did not, as in the case of Mr. Hume, amount to obstinacy. Hence, he seems to have been dealt with more leniently.

The conduct of Messrs. Hume and Jamieson caused a feeling of intense disappointment in the minds of the members of the Anti-Burgher Synod, and as they were men who could not bear to be trifled with, they, at their meeting in August, 1752, instructed the presbyteries not to license any one to preach, until he had expressed his willingness to accept any missionary appointment that the Synod might assign him, and that all theological students who would not give an expression of their willingness to submit to the Synod in its missionary appointments, were to be no longer regarded as theological students. Almost immediately after the passage of this act, the application for ministerial aid was renewed by the friends of the Secession in Pennsylvania. The Synod ordered Messrs. Alexander Gellatly and Andrew Bunyan to be "licensed without delay," that they might be sent to minister to these people.

The order was obeyed; but after having been licensed, Mr. Bunyan began to hesitate in his mind, and caused another delay. He stated to the Presbytery the difficulties in the way of his undertaking the mission, and the presbytery referred them to the Synod. After having heard and considered the difficulties of Mr. Bunyan, the Synod declared that they were not pertinent, and ordered him to proceed with his trials for ordination. Still, Mr. Bunyan declared that his "want of clearness" continued. The Synod determined not to swerve from its previous decision, and after several ineffectual efforts on the part of the Synod to remove the difficulties of Mr. Bunyan, his license was declared null and void.

No doubt there are some who will be ready to regard this as a high-handed act of ecclesiastical tyranny. All the facts in the case are not known, and the circumstances attending it are not, and cannot now, be well understood; but from anything that appears to the contrary, this act of the Anti-Burgher Synod is defensible. The preacher of the gospel is the property of the church. The King and Head of the church commands him to go wherever the indications of Providence and



the voice of the church (the people of God in this case), call him. His work is to preach the gospel. His individual preferences are ever to be regarded as matters of secondary consideration when compared with the voice of the church. It is not claimed that church courts are infallible. They often make mistakes; but in the Presbyterian form of church government provision is made for correcting these mistakes. In the case of Mr. Bunyan, it is, however, not claimed that the Anti-Burgher Synod did wrong in appointing him to go to Pennsylvania. No doubt, as wise and prudent men, they regarded him and Mr. Gellatly as the most fit persons who were at that time available for the transatlantic mission. The subsequent labors of Mr. Gellatly show that at least in his case, the judgment of the Synod was correct.

At the time that the Anti-Burgher Synod ordered Messrs. Gellatly and Bunyan to Pennsylvania to preach the gospel, America was a wild waste, full of wild beasts and venomous serpents, and destitute of nearly all the comforts of civilization. To a mind anxious to secure a position of luxury and ease, there was nothing fascinating in the forests of Pennsylvania. On the contrary, there was, in the very name America everything to make such a mind shudder and shrink back from a voyage thither. Safely, it may be said, that the first ministers who came from Europe to preach the gospel to the inhabitants of America, were richly endowed with a missionary spirit, and the ecclesiastical courts by which the first missionaries were sent across the Atlantic, were richly endowed with a spirit of heavenly wisdom, the precious fruits of which the American people are to-day enjoying. In depriving Mr. Bunyan of his license to preach because he refused to obey a lawful command, the Anti-Burgher Synod acted on the safe principle that law, to be respected, must be faithfully executed. The punishment was a wholesome warning to others, and it was profitable to Mr. Bunyan himself. Having had time for sober reflection, he presented himself before the Synod and confessed that he had given just ground of offense, and declared his willingness to go as a missionary either to Pennsylvania, or to any other field to which the Synod might see fit to send him. This being satisfactory to the Synod, his license was restored; but he was not again appointed to preach the gospel in America.



It would seem that in sending their first missionaries to Pennsylvania, the Anti-Burgher Synod was governed by the example of our Lord. He sent out his disciples "by two and two," and in conformity to his example did the Synod send Alexander Gellatly and Andrew Arnot to Pennsylvania. Mr. Bunyan had occasioned a delay of nearly a year. No objection being made by Mr. Gellatly, he was, as soon as convenient, licensed and ordained by his presbytery, with a view to entering upon the work to which he had been appointed by the Synod.

Mr. Arnot, the pastor of the congregation of Midholm, in the south of Scotland, volunteered to accompany Mr. Gellatly to Pennsylvania and remain for two years, provided the Synod would make provision for his congregation during his absence. The conditions upon which Mr. Arnot accompanied Mr. Gellatly seems to have been that he would remain two years in Pennsylvania, in the event no other missionary could be secured previous to that time; and if he should see fit to remain in Pennsylvania, the Synod would give their assent. Mr. Arnot was every way acceptable to the Synod, and their consent was cordially given to the conditions upon which he proposed to undertake the mission to the New World.

Very soon after the arrival of Messrs. Gellatly and Arnot the Presbytery of New Castle, subordinate to the Synod of New York and Pennsylvania, moved by a spirit which savors but little of the gospel of peace and love, published a "Warning against the Seceders." In this "Warning," Messrs. Gellatly and Arnot were stigmatized as "schismatics and errorists." That they might show their spleen and give vent to their hatred for the doctrines and religious practices of the Seceders, they republished, at Lancaster, Pa., a book which had, about 1749, been published by the Rev. Samuel Delap, in Ireland. It is clear that Mr. Delap, who was regarded as one of the leaders of the orthodox party in the Synod of Ulster, had very indistinct notions of the tenets held by the Seceders. It is hard even to conjecture what led him to waste his time and display his learning and ability in writing the book. It is notorious that the Presbytery of New Castle, previous to publishing the "Warning" and republishing the book, or rather pamphlet of the Rev. Samuel Delap, invited Messrs. Gellatly and Arnot to



unite with them. This they could not, or at least did not do. The points on which they differed were "the nature of faith and extent of the gospel offer." These, together with a difference respecting Covenanting, were the main grounds upon which the separation was continued. It will be remembered that one of the controversies in the Church of Scotland was about the offer of the gospel. There was a party in the Established Church of Scotland who held to what may, with propriety, be called a limited or restricted offer of the gospel. In other words, this party held to the doctrine of a limited atonement, and restricted the offer of the gospel to those for whom an atonement had been made. The doctrine of the Secession Church on this point, in the language of Ralph Erskine, is that the "offer of the gospel is universal to all that hear it." Another doctrinal difference between the Seceders and a strong and dominant party in the Church of Scotland was as to whether or not the sinner should prepare himself to come to Jesus before he actually comes. The Seceders held that the sinner was unable to make any preparation, and none was required. The party to whom reference is made, pronounced the following deliverance of the Auchterarder Presbytery as unsound: "It is not sound and orthodox to teach that we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ, and instating us in covenant with God."

It is not certainly known whether or not any of the early members of the New Castle Presbytery held the same notions on these points as those held by a party in the Church of Scotland; but it is probable they did, since it is known that the contemplated union was frustrated because they differed or could not agree on these points, and it is a fact beyond all controversy that no change ever took place in the Secession Church on these points.

It is but just and proper to remark that between the members of the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland and Ireland and the members of the Secession Church, both Burghers and Anti-Burghers and Covenanters—there were cherished feelings far from Christian. Those belonging to the different denominations, who came to America, brought with them the same hostile feelings which raged in their bosoms on the other side of the Atlantic. The simple, unvarnished truth is, the Secession



Church was hated and despised by Presbyterians, both in Europe and America, and the members of the Secession Church looked with a painful, and, perhaps, sinful degree of suspicion upon all other branches of the Presbyterian Church.

It will be admitted by every unprejudiced mind that these suspicions were not altogether without a foundation. One of the tendencies of the Presbyterian Church, both in Ireland and Scotland, is to embrace, in some of its forms, Arianism. The tendency of the Presbyterian Church, when first established in America, was to degenerate into Congregationalism, and New England Congregationalism has developed itself into Arianism of all grades and shades.

To the "Warning" issued by the New Castle Presbytery Messrs. Gellatly and Arnot replied in a pamphlet of 240 pages. In 1758, an answer to the work of Messrs. Gellatly and Arnot was published by Messrs. S. Finly and R. Smith. Mr. Gellatly again replied, in a work of more than 200 pages.

No one will contend that these controversies were attended with no injury to the cause of religion. Controversial writers wax warm and say many things that they themselves do not approve of when time cools the fever of dispute. Such was the case in the keen controversy which was carried on between Messrs. Finly and R. Smith, on the part of the Presbyterian Church, and Messrs. Gellatly and Arnot, on the part of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania.

That controversy, however, did good as well as evil. In itself it was only evil; but God, who overrules all things, made it redound to his own glory. It gave the members of the Associate Presbytery a fair opportunity to publish and advocate the doctrines and practices of their standards, and it served as a salutary check to the Presbyterian Church. Both parties were benefitted.

Whatever harm or injury may have grown out of that bitter controversy must be, in all honesty, laid to the charge of the Presbytery of New Castle and individuals in the Presbyterian Church. By them the proposition for union was made, and when the union could not be effected, they issued the "Warning" in which Gellatly and Arnot were published to the world as "disturbers of the peace, bigots and fanatics."



This controversy lasted for about six years, but it did not turn away Mr. Gellatly from his work as an humble minister of the gospel.

In November, 1753, the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania was organized, and during the first part of the next year Mr. Gellatly settled as pastor of Octoraro and Oxford congregations; the former in Lancaster, and the latter in Chester county, Pa. Here he continued to labor until the 12th of March, 1761, when he died, in the forty-second year of his age, and the eighth year after his arrival in America.

In the summer of 1754, Mr. Arnot returned to Scotland. Previous to his return, however, the Rev. James Proudfoot, a licentiate under the care of the Presbytery of Perth and Dunfermline, was, by order of the Anti-Burgher Synod, ordained, and directed to proceed to the transatlantic mission. Mr. Proudfoot set sail from Greenock for Pennsylvania in the early part of August, 1754, about one month after his ordination. He reached Boston in the month of September, and as soon as was possible, set out for Pennsylvania. In the city of Philadelphia he met the Rev. Andrew Arnot, then returning to Scotland.

After an itinerancy of four years, Mr. Proudfoot received a call from the Associate congregation in Pequa, Pa. Here he remained in the faithful discharge of his duties for a quarter of a century. After the Associate Reformed Church was constituted, Mr. Proudfoot having received and accepted a call from Salem, in the State of New York, moved there, with his family in the autumn of 1783. His earthly labors were brought to a close on the 22d of October, 1802, in the seventieth year of his age.

Notwithstanding the heavy demands made upon both branches of the Secession Church, at home, they never lost sight of the Foreign field. In less than thirty years after the constitution of the Associate Presbytery, two Presbyteries had been organized in Ireland, a number of missionaries sent to the Highlands of Scotland, and a mission station established in Nova Scotia. However interesting and edifying it might be to trace all the missionary labors and all the missionary successes of the Secession Church, it would not comport with our design.



At a very early period, America was regarded by the Secession Church as a most important missionary field. In 1758 Messrs Gellatly and Proudfoot were joined by Mr. Matthew Henderson. Very soon after his arrival in America, Mr. Henderson became the pastor of Oxford, Lancaster county, Pa. Here he labored for a period of about twenty years, or to the year 1781. About two years after the arrival of Mr. Henderson, the hands of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania were strengthened by the Rev. John Mason and two probationers, Robert Annan and John Smart. They landed in New York in June, 1761, and as Mr. Mason had been invited to come to America by a congregation in the city of New York, he was, in a short time, installed over this people, and remained their pastor until the time of his death, which occurred April 19, 1792. The church of which Mr. Mason was pastor was long known as "the Cedar Street Church."

After itinerating for a period of near two years, Mr. Annan was, on the 8th of June, 1763, ordained and installed at Marsh Creek, Adams county, Pa., pastor of Marsh Creek and Little Conewago congregations. Mr. Smart, after remaining for a short time, returned to Scotland.

In August, 1763, Mr. William Marshall, a probationer in connection with the Associate (Anti-Burgher) Presbytery of Perth, landed in Philadelphia. At the meeting of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, at Octoraro, on the 1st of November, 1764, three calls—one from the congregation of Deep Run, one from Octoraro, and one from Muddy Creek—were presented for the ministerial services and pastoral labors of Mr. Marshall. Mr. Matthew Henderson claimed that it was the duty of the presbytery, in a judicial capacity, to say positively which one of the three calls Mr. Marshall should accept. The other members of the presbytery, taking a different view of the matter, decided that Mr. Marshall be allowed the privilege of accepting any one of the three calls. In genuine Seceder style, Mr. Henderson had his dissent recorded in the minutes of the presbytery.

It is perhaps impossible, at this late date, when nearly all the circumstances connected with the case are forgotten, to decide which acted more in conformity with the principles of strict Presbyterianism, the presbytery or Mr. Henderson. Mr.



Marshall certainly had the right to decline accepting all of the calls. This he could not, however, have done without first having given the presbytery good and sufficient reasons for his declination. Had Mr. Marshall been in doubt as to which one of the calls he should accept, it was the duty of the presbytery to make the decision. The presbytery surely had the right to direct Mr. Marshall.

The dissent of Mr. Henderson having amounted to little, Mr. Marshall accepted the call from Deep Run, Bucks county, Pa., and on the 30th of August, 1765, was ordained and installed their pastor.



## CHAPTER IX.

PASTORAL CHARGES IN 1765—All Anti-Burghers—Thomas Clark First Burgher Minister who Came to America—Birth and Education of Mr. Clark—Licensed and Sent to Ireland—Settles at Ballybay—Main, Black and Clark Constitute Associate Presbytery of Down—Presbytery of Moyrah and Lisburn—History of Thomas Clark—Fought against the Pretender—Difficulties in Ireland—Thrust into Prison—Forced to Leave the Country—In Company with Three Hundred Members of his Congregation Comes to America—Reasons for Leaving Ireland—Solicited by Friends to Come to America—Opened a Correspondence with the Hon. Robert Harper—Obtains a Grant of Land—Part of his Congregation Settle in South Carolina; the other Part in New York—The Turner Grant—Erected a Church in 1766-67—Secession of the Church—Dr. Clark Visited South Carolina in 1769—Resigns the Pastorate of Salem, 1782, and Settles at Cedar Spring in 1786—Dr. Clark and the Anti-Burghers Coalesce, in 1765—The Coalescence Disapproved by the Anti-Burgher Synod—Kinlock and Telfair Sent to America—Join the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania—John Smith and John Rodgers Sent by the Anti-Burgher Synod to Dissolve the Union of the Burghers and Anti-Burghers in America—Take their Seats as Presbyters—Burgher Congregations in America.

The pastoral charges now (1765), in connection with the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, were five. All the Secession ministers who, up to 1764, had come to America, were in connection with the General Associate, or, as it was usually called, Anti-Burgher Synod. The first minister in connection with the Associate or Burgher Synod, who came to the new world, was the celebrated Thomas Clark, or *Clarke*, according to his own orthography.

The Rev. Thomas Clark was, by birth and education, a Scotchman. He was born on the 5th of November, 1720, and graduated sometime previous to 1745, at the University of Glasgow. During the years 1745-46, he served his country faithfully in the army which fought against the Pretender. The first ecclesiastical mention that is made of his name, so far as has been discovered, is by the Burgher Synod, at its meeting at Stirling on the 16th of June, 1747. Application was made to that body, at that time, by several societies for a "supply of sermon." The field was too great for the number of labor-



ers. The harvest was truly great; but the laborers were few. All that the Synod could do was to order that James Wright, Thomas Main and Thomas Clark be entered on trials for license by the Presbytery of Glasgow. This was done, and in April of the following year, Thomas Clark was licensed to preach the gospel. After preaching for about one year in Scotland, and two years in Ireland, he was, on the 23d of July, 1751, ordained and installed pastor of the congregation of Ballibay, Ireland. On the next day, he, in connection with the Revs. Thomas Main and Andrew Black, were constituted into a Presbytery which they designated the "Associate Presbytery of Down." This Associate Presbytery of Down must not be confounded with the Presbytery of Moyrah and Lisburn in connection with the Anti-Burgher Synod. This latter was formed on the 13th of April, 1750. The ministers in connection with it, at the time of the organization, were Isaac Patton, David Arrott and Alexander Stewart.

The history of the Rev. Thomas Clark is full of thrilling interest. It is little that is known of him; but that little is so wonderful that it produces an insatiable craving to know more. Having completed his literary course in the University of Glasgow, he then graduated in medicine. Hence, he was at that time, and is yet spoken of as Dr. Clark. At some time previous to 1745, he was "chaplain in the family of a gentleman resident in Galloway, and signalized his loyalty by taking up arms against the Pretender." It is hard to tell what significance is to be attached to the word "chaplain" in the preceding quotation. Certain it is, according to the records of the Burgher Synod, that Mr. Clark was not licensed to preach until April, 1748. In June, 1749, he was sent by the Burgher Presbytery of Glasgow to Ireland. After his arrival in Ireland, until his settlement as pastor of the congregation of Ballibay, a period of two years, his itinerate labors were very extensive, embracing the counties of Monaghan, Tyrone, Armagh and Down. Without being what men of the world would call great, he was regarded by all as full of zeal and eminently pious. "He wore a Highland bonnet, and expressed himself in broad Scotch, and there was nothing either in his dark visage, or in his tall, gaunt figure, fitted to make any very



favorable impression on a stranger; but those who entered into conversation with him were soon made sensible that they were holding fellowship with a minister of Christ."

In Ireland, Dr. Clark was loved, feared and hated. He was loved by all pious people, feared by profligate sinners, and hated by new-light ministers. By this latter class of individuals he was fined, imprisoned, and on one occasion forced to leave the country for a time, in order to save his life. Under circumstances sufficient to try the faith and patience of any man, Dr. Clark labored in Ireland for nearly sixteen years. His labors were by no means confined to his own congregation, but he was, in journeys, often, constantly on the lookout for some place where he could do something to advance his Master's kingdom. On the 10th of May, 1764, he, in company with about three hundred of his congregation and neighbors, set sail from Newry, Ireland, for America. They landed in safety at New York on the 28th of July. In the coming of Dr. Clark to America, and the circumstances which led to that event, as well as in every other dispensation of Providence concerning him, may be traced in legible characters the purpose of God to overrule all things for his own glory and the good of his people. It is the prerogative of God to bring light out of darkness, order out of confusion, and good out of evil. This was demonstrated in the events resulting from the coming of Dr. Clark to America.

It is said that the old eagle, when she would have her young ones quit the nest, tears it to pieces, thus forcing them to leave it. So God, when he would have his servants leave one field of labor and enter on another, he tears up the old nest—breeds confusion in the camp.

Dr. Clark either had, or thought he had, ceased to be useful in the congregation of Ballybay. The youth of the congregation had grown indifferent, he says, with regard to religious instruction on the Sabbath, and the old spent the interval between sermons on the Sabbath in foolish and secular conversation. The membership of the congregation was growing neither in numbers nor piety; and in addition, they were withholding from their pastor a comfortable support. Prompted by the indications of Providence, and guided, as we may safely conclude, by God's Holy Spirit, he bid adieu to the friends of



his youth and the scenes of his early labors, and turned his anxious eyes toward the home of the oppressed of every clime.

In addition to the fact that Dr. Clark's usefulness in Ireland was apparently growing less and less each year, his personal friends, who had previously emigrated to America, were anxious that he would join them in their new home west of the Atlantic. As early as 1755, and perhaps at a date anterior to this, several families, members of the congregation at Ballybay, came to America. Some of these families settled in New York; one at least—the Harris family—in Mecklenburg county, N. C.; and two—Kilpatrick and Hamilton—in Chester county, and one, by the name of Young, in York county, S. C. By these personal friends of Dr. Clark and other individuals in America, who at one time had been connected with the congregations under the supervision of the Associate Presbytery of Down, he was earnestly solicited to come to America. Under existing circumstances, he concluded that it was his duty to yield to these solicitations.

Before leaving Ireland, however, he made provision for the temporal comfort of those who might accompany him. He opened a correspondence with the Hon. Robert Harper, of King's College, in the city of New York. The names of one hundred families, which designed emigrating from the north of Ireland to America, were furnished Mr. Harper by Dr. Clark. That these families might be provided a home in the New World, Mr. Harper obtained from the government, on the 23d of November, 1763, forty thousand acres of land, in what is at present Warren county, New York. After landing at New York city, the congregation (such it actually was,) of Dr. Clark divided. Part set out by land for Long Cane and Cedar Spring, in Abbeville county, S. C.; and the other, and greater part passed up the Hudson as far as Stillwater. There the larger part halted, while a few families proceeded to the tract of land secured by Mr. Harper for their settlement.

Here they spent the winter; but becoming discouraged on account of the dreary aspect of the country, they returned, in the early spring, to their friends at Stillwater; and although, on the 15th of May, 1765, Mr. Harper obtained for each family a grant of four hundred acres of land, they preferred not to accept this generous offer.



Dr. Clark now set about to find for his friends and congregation another home. An extensive exploration, when the facilities for such a work are considered, was made. The region of country embraced in Washington county received his chief attention. During the spring of 1765, he visited the plain on which the town of Salem now stands. In the house of James Turner, the only inhabitant of the plain at that time, he preached to a few persons who had collected from the few scattering dwellings in the surrounding regions.

In the providence of God, it was so ordered that the time at which Dr. Clark visited the region was most favorable for accomplishing the object which he had in view, and all the circumstances conspired to its favorable completion.

On the 7th of August, 1764, the Governor of the province of New York had conveyed to a company of twenty-four persons in Massachusetts 25,000 acres of land, in what is now Washington county. Two of the company were Alexander Turner and his son James. From the former, since he was, perhaps, the most efficient member of the company, the grant was designated as "Turner's Grant," and by this appellation it was long known. One half, or 12,000 acres of this grant was, by the original company, conveyed to Oliver De Lancey and Peter Dubois, of the city of New York. During the same year, 1764, the whole tract was surveyed and divided into lots of less than ninety acres each. The lots were then distributed by ballot, between the original company and De Lancey and Dubois. Previous to the drawing, however, it was mutually agreed and legally arranged that six lots, each containing eighty-eight acres, should be reserved and devoted exclusively to the support of a minister and school-master. Having been apprised of these facts, and being favorably impressed with this region, Dr. Clark immediately set about to procure the De Lancey and Dubois part of the Turner grant, on which to settle his congregation. Without delay, he set out in person for New York, for the purpose of completing the arrangement with the proprietors. His efforts were crowned with success. De Lancey and Dubois conveyed to him the whole of the 12,000 acres of land free of all charge for five years, after which the settlers were to pay an annual rent of one shilling per acre. Part of the congregation removed from Stillwater, in September, 1765,



and in the spring of the following year they were joined by the remainder. Families came from Scotland and Ireland, and the country was rapidly settled by an energetic, thrifty and pious people. The town was called Salem, which name it still bears.

During the winter of 1766-67, a log church was erected—the first in Washington county, New York, and at that time the only church in the State of New York north of Albany. In this rude structure the congregation assembled on the last Saturday in May, 1767, and worshipped the God of their fathers. No organization took place. A congregation of two hundred communicants, with its pastor, the Rev. Thomas Clark, M. D., and its elders, George Oswald, David Tomb, William Thompson, William Moncrieff, William Wilson, Richard Hoy, John Foster and David Hanna, crossed the Atlantic and settled in the wild woods of eastern New York.

In the year 1769, Dr. Clark visited that portion of his congregation which went to South Carolina. In the summer of 1782, he resigned the pastorate of Salem, and in 1786, was installed pastor of Cedar Spring and Long Cane congregations, in Abbeville county, S. C. Here, on the 26th of December, 1792, death terminated his earthly labors.

Previous to the arrival of Dr. Clark, all the Secession ministers who came to America, were in connection with the Anti-Burgher Synod. Dr. Clark was, as we have elsewhere stated, a member of the Presbytery of Down, Ireland, in connection with the Burgher Synod of Scotland. Since there were no royal towns in the wild woods of America, and consequently no Burgher oaths to be imposed on any one, Dr. Clark, like a sensible man, was unwilling to keep up a distinction where no difference of opinion existed. Very soon after his arrival in America, he made application to connect with the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania. This application was made before his congregation left Stillwater. The members of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania took the same view of the matter as that entertained by Dr. Clark, and on the 2d of September, 1765, the union was consummated on a basis entirely satisfactory to the individuals immediately concerned.



As it can be of but little interest to any one at the present day to know the conditions upon which Dr. Clark, a Burgher, was received as a member of the Anti-Burgher Presbytery of Pennsylvania, it is not necessary that we transcribe the articles of agreement. Suffice it to say that both parties signified their approbation of the "Act, Declaration and Testimony" of the Secession Church previous to the rupture caused by the difference of opinion concerning the Burgher oath. Both parties were prohibited from either censuring or approving what had been done or said in favor of or against taking the Burgher oath. This was wise, and if we consider the violent controversies which had been waged between Burghers and Anti-Burghers, it was eminently creditable to both the heads and hearts of all the parties entering into that union. The course pursued by the Presbytery of Pennsylvania was disapproved of by the Anti-Burgher Synod of Scotland; but the Burgher Synod favored the action of Dr. Clark.

The next Secession ministers sent to America were David Telfair and Samuel Kinlock. Both were in connection with the Burgher branch of the Secession. They sailed for America in the early part of the spring of 1766. David Telfair was an ordained minister, and at the time of his appointment to go to America was the pastor of the congregation at Bridge-of-Teith, and Samuel Kinlock was a probationer. Almost immediately on the arrival of these two Burgher missionaries, they began to make arrangements for a coalescence with the Anti-Burgher Presbytery of Pennsylvania. David Telfair wrote home to the Burgher Synod that this union was consummated on the 5th of June, 1766.

Both Telfair and Kinlock returned to Scotland—the latter in the spring of 1769, and the former during the latter part of 1767, or spring of 1768.

It was contemplated by the Burgher Synod of Scotland that Telfair and Kinlock, together with Dr. Clark, would constitute themselves into a presbytery for the better management of the mission entrusted to their care. Both Telfair and Kinlock concluded, as Dr. Clark had done before their arrival, that they could best advance the cause of the Redeemer by forming a union with the Anti-Burgher Presbytery of Pennsylvania. This union seems to have been brought about by the earnest



solicitation of the people in America, in connection with the Burgher branch of the Secession. Previous to Dr. Clark's union with the Anti-Burgher Presbytery of Pennsylvania, the people of that State, in connection with the Burgher Synod of Scotland, wrote a beseeching letter to the Burgher Synod that the controversies about the Burgher oath would forever cease, and that Burghers and Anti-Burghers "might be one again in the Lord, both at home and abroad." To this entreaty the Burgher Synod of Scotland was ever inclined to listen; but to many in connection with the Anti-Burgher Synod the subject of a union was highly offensive. It is proper to mention in this place, that although a real union was formed between the Burghers and Anti-Burghers in America, neither party severed its connection with the denomination to which it originally belonged. We scarcely feel able to judge of this strange compact. So far as we are aware, it is without a precedent, and could only be justified on account of circumstances which rarely have an existence. There was but one presbytery, and yet part of the members of that presbytery were in connection with and subject to the higher courts of one denomination, and the other members to the higher courts of a different denomination.

The union entered into between the Burghers and Anti-Burghers in America was heartily disapproved of by the Anti-Burgher Synod of Scotland. In 1770, John Rodgers and John Smith were sent by the Anti-Burgher Synod of Scotland to America. They were instructed to require the Presbytery of Pennsylvania to annul the compact which had been entered into with the Burghers. On the 5th of June, 1771, Messrs Smith and Rodgers appeared before the Presbytery of Pennsylvania, at Pequa, and read the instructions of the Synod; but no new presbytery was organized. Neither were the Burghers expelled; nor were the minutes of the union expunged, as the Synod demanded, but Messrs. Smith and Rodgers both took their seats as presbyters. This indicates that Smith and Rodgers approved of the course pursued by Mason and Annan and the other members of the Anti-Burgher Presbytery of Pennsylvania.



From that time the controversies about the Burgher oath forever ceased in America. It would have been well if the mother church in Scotland had improved the lesson taught by her children in the New World.

The prospects in America for the Burgher Synod were nearly, if not altogether as favorable as for the Anti-Burghers. Dr. Clark might have waited patiently until Telfair and Kinlock arrived, and then, in accordance with the instructions given them by the Burgher Synod, they could have constituted themselves into a presbytery and organized churches. This was not done, and it was wise that it was not. Only three strictly Burgher congregations were ever gathered in America, and these were not canonically organized. They were Salem, Shippen-street, Philadelphia, and Cambridge. All the other Secession congregations were gathered by the Anti-Burghers, or by the united body.

After the coalescence of the Burghers and Anti-Burghers, the Anti-Burgher Synod of Scotland took less interest than formerly in its trans-Atlantic missions. In 1773, however, William Logan and John Murray were sent to Pennsylvania. In 1771 David Telfair returned to America, but remained an independent Burgher until the 12th of August, 1780, when he united with the Reformed (Covenanter) Presbytery; and with that presbytery came into the union forming the Associate Reformed Church.



## CHAPTER X.

NEGOTIATIONS looking to an Union of the Associates and Reformed Presbyterians—Division of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania—Revolutionary War—Spirit of Ecclesiastical Union—Proposition for Union in 1754; again in 1769—Negotiations Cease—Political Disturbances Drew the Associates and Covenanters Nearer Together—Their Differences only Political—Covenanters Opposed by all Denominations—Associates and Covenanters Warmly Espouse the Cause of the Colonies—Reasons why the Associates and Covenanters Should Unite—Anti-Burghers More Numerous than the Burghers—Burghers More Tolerant—Ministers Educated in Scotland—Membership from Ireland—Scotch-Irish—Two classes of Scotch-Irish—Membership of the Presbyterian Church—Corruptions of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland—Belfast Society—Character of the Irish Seceders—Irish, English and Scotch Presbyterianism—Seceders Scotch Presbyterians—Difference between Associates and Covenanters—Occupied the Same Territory—Cultivate Each Other's Friendship—First Meeting for Conference—Both Cautious—Second Meeting for Conference—The matter brought before the Associate Presbytery—Overture by Rev. Murray—Associate Presbytery met at Middle Octoraro—Spend Two Days in Conference—Principle Subjects Discussed by the Conference—Basis of Union—Conference met at Pequa, Pa.—Some of the Associates Opposed to the Union on Any Terms—Conference Meets at Big Spring—Basis of Union Discussed—Charges Made—Warm Discussion—New Proposition Drawn Up—Basis of Union Adopted by Presbytery of New York, 1780; by Reformed Presbytery, 1781; by Presbytery of Pennsylvania, 1782—James Clarkson and William Marshall Refuse to go into the Union—Clarkson and Marshall Continue the Associate Presbytery—Associate Reformed Synod organized—Names of those Composing the Associate Reformed Synod—Andrew Patton—James Martin—William Martin—Object Designed to be Effected by the Union—Result of the Union the Formation of Another Denomination—The Prosperity of the Associate Presbytery Continued to Exist for Seventy-six Years—The Covenanters Send to Scotland for Ministers—Covenanters Still Exist—The Effect of the Covenanters and Seceders on the American Government.

We have now reached the period during which began those ecclesiastical negotiations which terminated in the formation of the Associate Reformed Church. However interesting it might be, it is, at this late date, with the few and painfully meagre records which have been preserved, impossible to mark with precision the exact moment that those negotiations first began. Equally difficult would it be to state succinctly all the causes which first led to friendly intercourse, and finally to more formal negotiations between the parties.



In 1776, the same year that the American Colonies declared themselves free and independent, the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, which, as is elsewhere stated, was organized on the 2d of November, 1753, by Alexander Gellatly and Andrew Arnot, was divided into two presbyteries. One retained the original name—Presbytery of Pennsylvania—and the other was called the Presbytery of New York. This division took place on the 20th of May, near two months before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. By this division the Presbytery of Pennsylvania was made to consist of eight ministers, and that of New York of three pastors and two probationers. The names of those belonging to the first were James Proudfoot, Matthew Henderson, William Marshall, John Rodgers, John Smith, James Clarkson and John Murray, pastors; and James Martin without a charge. The members of the Presbytery of New York were John Mason, Robert Annan and Thomas Clark, pastors; and William Logan, licentiate. These two Presbyteries were coördinate, but independent, and sustained no other relation to each other than that they were both subject to the Anti-Burgher Synod of Edinburgh.

When the Presbytery of New York was organized, in the city of New York, on the 20th of May, 1776, the ties which bound the American colonies to the mother country had virtually been severed. The carnage had actually begun. The battles of Lexington, Bunker Hill and Quebec had been fought, and the blood of American citizens had been shed. Not only so, but the storm had been gathering since 1755, a period of more than twenty years. The love of the early settlers of America for the mother country had, in many instances, been changed into hatred; and, in nearly every case it had become cold, and was fast verging to positive indifference.

A spirit of ecclesiastical union had, for a number of years, been at work among all the churches in America holding the Presbyterian faith. The first formal effort to unite the different branches of the Presbyterian church in America was made in 1754; the next in 1769. Both these efforts were unsuccessful, and all correspondence between the Associate and Reformed Presbyterian judicatories on the one part, and the Synod of New York and Philadelphia on the other part, ceased. Friendly intercourse was not, however, by any of these negotiations,



broken between the Associates and the Reformed Presbyterians, and the political disturbances in which the country was involved, had a direct and powerful tendency to draw these two branches of the Presbyterian family more closely together. This was to be expected. The difference which existed between the Associates—both Burghers and Anti-Burghers—and the Reformed Presbyterians or Covenanters was of a political rather than an ecclesiastical character. In doctrine and worship they were, to all human appearances, identical. The Covenanters were Presbyterians of the type which existed in Scotland between the years 1638 and 1650. They regarded the Government of Great Britain as stained with the blood of the Covenanted fathers, and on this account they rejected it as unscriptural, and on all proper occasions boldly testified against it as a sinful compact which exposed the nation to the judgments of heaven. On account of their peculiar notions respecting the civil magistracy—notions which were not well understood, and more frequently wrongly interpreted—all parties in the State and all denominations of Christians joined hand in hand in heaping upon the Covenanters dishonorable epithets and in stigmatizing them as the “anti-government party.”

Both Associates and Covenanters heartily approved of the course pursued by the American colonies. It is not saying too much to assert that the Covenanters had, as demonstrated by this approbation, changed to some extent their notions with respect to the duties and powers, or rather the extent of the powers, of the civil magistrate. This removed the great, and, in fact, the only barrier in the way to a union with the Associates.

There were several reasons why a union was formed between the Associates and Covenanters, and why all efforts to form a union with the Synod of New York and Philadelphia were unsuccessful.

Of the two branches of the Secession in America, at the period of which we are treating, the Anti-Burghers were, perhaps, the more numerous; but the Burghers constituted a part of nearly all the congregations, and were more tolerant in spirit, and consequently always most ready to heal the divisions in the visible church.



Previous to the union which formed the Associate Reformed Church, all the ministers of the American Associate Church, who had any part in effecting the union, were born and educated classically, and all theologically, with, perhaps, a single exception—that of David Annan—in Scotland. The membership however, were nearly all from Ireland ; less, perhaps, than one-fourth being from Scotland. They were what is known in history as Scotch-Irish. Their ancestors had emigrated from Scotland to Ireland during the cruel persecutions which began shortly after the restoration of Charles II. They belonged to the stricter or more rigid class of the Church of Scotland. The peculiar doctrines and practices which gave the Church of Scotland its distinctive and distinguishing features were instilled by these exiles into the minds of their children. These children, as a necessary consequence, affiliated with the Secession Church, rather than with the Presbyterianism which prevailed at that time in Ireland, and as a natural consequence introduced the Associate Presbytery into their adopted land. The membership of the American Presbyterian Church, previous to the American Revolution, was partly Scotch-Irish, but very different in many respects from the Scotch Irish which formed the prevailing element in the American Associate Church. The Scotch-Irish, in connection with the American Presbyterian Church, were generally the descendants of the Scotch who began to leave their native land and settle in Ireland during the reign of James I. For a long period they retained intact all the prevailing features of Scotch Presbyterianism. But gradually the leaven which had been operating in the churches in England and on the continent of Europe was introduced, cautiously at first, but openly and defiantly after a short interval, into the Church of both Scotland and Ireland. The beginning of the eighteenth century and the formation of the

#### BELFAST SOCIETY

marks the period of the visible introduction of error in doctrine and laxity in practice into the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. The same period is noted as the beginning of a visible decline in the Church of Scotland. To the Rev. John Simson, professor of divinity in the University of Glasgow, and his adherents is due the credit of disturbing the peace and



harmony of the Church of Scotland, and the leaders of the corrupting party in the Presbyterian Church of Ireland were the Revs. John Abernethy, William Taylor, Alexander Brown and James Kirkpatrick. Abernethy and Kirkpatrick had been students with Simson in the Divinity Hall in Glasgow, and ever afterwards kept up with him a regular correspondence.

It is a fact worthy of note that nearly all the ministers who joined the Belfast Society had been either the fellow students of Professor Simson or had been his pupils. From this fact it may be naturally inferred that the doctrines of Professor Simson and the doctrines of the Belfast Society were, in the main, identical. This is not a bare inference, but it is a fact well substantiated by history.

Those who opposed the doctrinal innovations of Professor Simson were ever regarded as the more strict party, and by the more rigid of this strict party was organized the Associate Presbytery. In Ireland the party which opposed the Belfast Society belonged generally to the emigration from Scotland, which occurred during the reign of Charles II., and were regarded as more closely resembling in doctrine and worship the Church of Scotland at a period long past than they did either the Presbyterian Church of Ireland or the Church of Scotland as these churches then existed. It was by those who set themselves in opposition to the innovations introduced by the Belfast Society that the Associate Church was introduced into Ireland.

It is common in some sections to regard Irish, English and Scotch Presbyterianism as identical in doctrine, and the same in their mode of worship and form of government. This is far from the truth. English Presbyterianism, especially at the time of which we are speaking, resembled Independency fully as much as it did Scotch Presbyterianism. In America it has lost all, or nearly all, its Presbyterian features, and fully developed its Independency and the peculiar notions advocated by both Professor Simson, of Glasgow, and John Abernethy, of Ireland. Irish Presbyterianism has ever been of a better type than that of England. Still, its standard, as exhibited in actual practice, has ever been of a more flexible character than that of the Scotch. The Seceders and Covenanters preserved—the former slightly modified and modernized, the latter in all



its picturesque majesty—the Scotch type of Presbyterianism. In America both Seceder and Covenanter Churches were often called “Scotch Churches,” and the members of these denominations were called “Scotch people,” and more frequently, “bigoted Scotchmen.” The Presbyterian Church had been planted in America about fifty years before the Secession Church had an actual existence. Leaving out the New England Congregationalist, which was but another name for English Presbyterianism, the mass of the American Presbyterian Church was of Irish descent, and generally the descendants of the Scotch who began to emigrate to Ireland in the reign of the First of the Stuarts. They were Scotch-Irish-Ulster Presbyterians; but it was a Presbyterianism very different, in many of its leading features, from the Presbyterianism embraced by the Covenanters and Associates.

It is not the province of the mere historian to say which was best or which was worst; which was genuine, or which was spurious. We may safely say neither was spurious; but Ulster Presbyterianism was more pliable, less rigid, and exhibited an affinity for the Congregationalism of English Puritans, which to both the Associates and Covenanters was for a long period intolerable.

The peculiar features which characterized these three branches of the Presbyterian Church one hundred years ago, are, to a very noticeable extent, preserved to the present day. They have enough in common to show that they had the same origin and enough of difference to warrant them in maintaining distinct and separate organizations. The opposition to a union between the Associates and the Presbyterian Church was ever almost entirely confined to the Associates. At no time would there have been any difficulty in consummating a union, so far as the Presbyterian Church was concerned. It is true that so far as is remembered, no formal effort ever was made to form an union between the Covenanters and Presbyterians; but had such an effort been made, its only opponents would, in all probability, have been Covenanters.

However great may be the general resemblance existing between the Presbyterian Church of either America, England or Ireland, and either the Reformed Presbyterian Church or the



Associate or Associate Reformed Church, there always have been, and are to-day particulars, both in doctrine and worship, in which they widely differ.

The only real difference, however, which existed between the Associates and Covenanters was with reference, as has been already stated, to the extent of the power of the civil magistrate. This difference was really removed by the position taken by both parties in the struggle in which the American colonies were engaged. The Associates were, to a man, Whigs, and if there was a Tory among the Covenanters he was a recreant to his avowed principles and covenanted engagements, and so was no longer a Covenanter. The Covenanter Church and the Associate Church were planted in America by the same race of people and near the same time. The Rev. John Cuthbertson came to America in 1751, and the Rev. Alexander Gellatly in 1753. The field occupied by these pioneers was the same; and although the Associates and Covenanters in Scotland and Ireland looked upon each other with a suspicious eye, in America they cultivated each other's friendship, and took a deep interest in each other's welfare. A pure and heaven-born magnetism began to attract the parties towards each other so soon as they set their feet on American soil. They had buried at least much of their animosities in the Atlantic, and now sought the things which make for peace. Imperceptibly, and by a power like those infinitesimal forces which are apparently nothing at any particular moment, but which finally move mountains, the parties were drawn together.

The first formal meeting for conference was held in the house of Samuel Patterson, at Donegal, Lancaster county, Pa., on the 30th of September, 1777. Previous to this, the subject of union between these two Scotch branches of the Presbyterian Church in America, had been, in all probability, discussed in private. Many years previous to the arrival of the Rev. Messrs. Matthew Linn and Alexander Dobbin, the Rev. John Cuthbertson and the Associate ministers then in America had often met. So far as anything to the contrary appears, the Associate ministers and John Cuthbertson lived on terms of social intimacy and ecclesiastical and religious friendship.



When, then, it is said that the first conference for union was on the 30th of September, 1777, all that is meant is that prior to that date no formal action had been taken in the matter.

Both the Associates and Covenanters belonged to that class of men who think before they act. With some plausibility they might be charged with having been self-willed and opinionated, but not with rashness. They never came to a conclusion until they had examined the matter thoroughly in all its present and future bearings. Having, by rather a tedious process, reached a conclusion, they ceased to reason and began to act promptly, determinedly and fearlessly. It was near five years before the union was consummated, and not until after the parties had met in conference more than twenty times. At the first conference, only the Rev. John Cuthbertson, of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Revs. John Smith, James Proudfoot and Matthew Henderson, of the Associate Church, were present. At this meeting little was done except appointing a time and selecting a place for another meeting. The second meeting was appointed to be held at Pequa, Pa., on March 31, 1778. At this conference all the Covenanter ministers were present, and the Rev. Messrs. Proudfoot, Murray, Clarkson and Smith, of the Associate Presbytery.

As many as three conferences were held before the matter was brought before the Associate Presbytery in a judicial capacity. The object of these first conferences seems to have been to ascertain privately the sentiments of the parties. At the meeting of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, at Tohickon, Bucks county, Pa., October 21, 1778, the following overture was introduced by Rev. John Murray:

"That this Presbytery expressly nominate and appoint, some week hereafter, as soon as convenience will permit, to take into serious consideration the subject of the proposed union with the Covenanters, and to confer with them in an amicable manner on the same subject, in order to try whether or not a coalescence can be brought about in consistency with the glory of God and the cause of truth and the comfort of the Church. And for proceeding in this matter with greater regularity, it is further proposed that this Presbytery set apart one of the days of the week that may be nominated for the conference, for the purpose of conferring together by themselves on the subject of the proposed union, and for solemn prayer unto God for his special direction in this matter."

This overture was not adopted; but what was its equivalent, was. A meeting for conference with the Covenanters had previously been appointed, to be held at Middle Octoraro, on the



29th of October. The Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania agreed to meet at the place selected for the conference, on the 27th, two days before the time appointed for the conference. Eight ministers and five ruling elders, in connection with the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and the Rev. John Mason and the Rev. Thomas Clark, of the Associate Presbytery of New York, were present at the meeting of the Presbytery on the 27th, and at the meeting of the conference, on the 29th of October, 1778. All the members of the Reformed Presbytery were present.

In the meeting of the Associate Presbytery, at this time, the principal subject discussed was the propriety of holding a conference with the Reformed Presbytery. The Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania consumed two days in discussing this question. In the debates, Messrs. Mason and Clark, of the Associate Presbytery of New York, took part. At length it was agreed, whether unanimously or not is not certainly known, but most probably not, to hold the conference. Messrs. Smith and Rodgers were appointed a committee to prepare the subjects to be considered by the conference.

At 10 o'clock the conference met. It consisted of John Murray, James Proudfoot, Matthew Henderson, William Marshall, John Smith, James Clarkson and William Logan, ministers; and William Moore, James Brown, Robert Thomson, William Finley and Alexander Moore, ruling elders of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania; the Rev. John Mason and the Rev. Thomas Clark, of the Associate Presbytery of New York; and John Cuthbertson, Matthew Linn and Alexander Dobbin, ministers of the Reformed Presbytery.

Messrs. Smith and Rodgers presented the following subjects for the consideration of the conference, viz.: "Redemption." "The Origin and Channel of Civil Government." "The Moral Law." "The Kingdom of Christ." "The Qualifications of Civil Rulers." "The Obligation of our Solemn Covenants." "The Lawfulness of Civil Establishments in Religion." "The Reformed Presbyterian's Testimony."

After a free and full interchange of opinions, it was found that considerable diversity of sentiment existed among the members of the Conference. Associates differed from Associates, and Covenanters from Covenanters about as much as



Associates differed from Covenanters. Some were of the opinion that all negotiations having in view an union of the two bodies should be dropped. The majority, however, thought differently, and the following propositions as a basis of union were drawn up:

1. That Jesus Christ died only for the elect.
2. That there is an appropriation in the nature of faith.
3. That the gospel is indiscriminately addressed to mankind sinners.
4. That the righteousness of Christ is the alone proper condition of the covenant of grace.
5. That civil power originates from God as Creator, and not from Christ as Mediator.
6. That magistracy, in respect of its sanctified use, is dispensed by Christ, to whom the Kingdom of Providence is committed, in subserviency to the Kingdom of Grace.
7. That the law of nature and the moral law revealed in the Bible, are substantially the same, though the latter expresses the will of God far more fully than the former; and that therefore among Christians, magistracy and the duties thereunto belonging, are subject to the general directions of the Holy Scriptures.
8. That some qualifications are in Scripture required as essentially needful to the being of magistracy; such as wisdom, justice and veracity, in due proportions; but the profession of the true religion is not absolutely needful to the being of magistracy, except when it is made by the people a consideration of government, but is at all times of great necessity to the well being of civil government.

The above propositions were submitted for future consideration, without any discussion at the time.

Having agreed to hold the next meeting at Pequa, Pa., on June 9, 1779, the conference adjourned.

From all the documents which have been preserved, it seems that the opposition to the contemplated union was confined mainly to the Associates. The Covenanter ministers and an overwhelming majority of the people belonging to the Reformed Presbytery, were, from the beginning of these conferences, willing and anxious to form a union with the Associate Presbytery. Although the Covenanters were ever regarded as the more rigid in all their notions of doctrine and practice, they entertained great regard for the Associate Presbytery. This was the case with the "Society People" prior to the organization of the Reformed Presbytery in Scotland, in 1743. It is true that both Covenanters and Seceders, while in Scotland, did things, in their intercourse with each other, which may be rightly



named puerile. The result of these puerile acts was an alienation of feeling which was sometimes developed into acts of hostility.

In America both parties suffered the bitter feelings of the unsociable and unhappy past to die.

There were, however, some persons in the Associate Presbytery who opposed with all their might and main all correspondence with the Covenanters. The leaders of this opposing party were the Rev. Messrs. James Clarkson and William Marshall, both members of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania.

The next meeting of the Associate Presbytery was held at Big Spring, on May 26, 1779. All the members, except Messrs. Marshall and Henderson, were present. The eight propositions which had been submitted as a basis of union were taken up and considered *seriatim*. The first, second, third, fourth and fifth were unanimously adopted, but the last three were rejected and the following substituted in their stead:

6. That the Kingdom of Providence is committed to our Lord Jesus Christ. by the Father, in subserviency to his Spiritual Kingdom in the church. Magistracy, as well as other common benefits, he limits, directs and overrules for obtaining that great end.

7. That though the law of nature be the grand foundation of magistracy, and the only proper standard by which every civil ruler can be directed in the administration of his government; yet for obtaining the full advantage of the great ends of his office, the peace and happiness of civil society, he is indispensably bound to receive the aid that supernatural revelation (if in the possession of it) offers for the obtaining of that important end.

8. That some degree of personal qualifications, and that of a moral kind, such as wisdom, justice, knowledge, &c., are absolutely necessary to render any individual capable of being invested with any civil office, and are absolutely necessary to the right administration of that office is a truth clearly indicated by the law of nature; and although the profession of the true religion, the practice of holiness, with other evidences of a person's interest in Christ (all of which is the prerogative of Scripture to reveal), are of great use to civil society, and the administration of civil power in that society, yet they are not revealed in the law of nature; therefore, are not the origin of civil power, nor the rule of its administration, but only of its advantage.

It is certainly not very easy to discover wherein these propositions differ from those submitted "for future consideration" at the meeting of the conference in October, 1778. All the difference that can be discovered is in the words in which



the same ideas are expressed. The Associate Presbytery seems to have concluded, at least some of its members concluded, that the propositions submitted by the conference of 1778 for consideration at the approaching conference were too vague, and capable of different interpretations.

The conference met, according to adjournment, at Pequa, Pa., on the 9th of June, 1779. All the ministers in connection with the Reformed Presbytery and three ruling elders, viz.: William Brown, James McKnight and David Dunwidie, were present. Of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania there were present James Proudfoot, James Clarkson, William Marshall and John Smith, ministers; and Robert Aitken, Samuel Harper and William Moore, ruling elders. Robert Annan and William Logan, ministers, and ruling elder William Gillespie, were present from the Associate Presbytery of New York.

The Rev. James Clarkson was chosen president of the conference. The propositions submitted at Middle Octoraro "for future consideration" as a basis of union were read, and then the amendments made by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania were read.

The Covenanters were ready to accept the former, but objected to the alterations made by the Associate Presbytery. A long and warm debate followed, which those who were opposed to the contemplated union probably thought, and certainly hoped, would put an end forever to all negotiations.

The hair-splitting differences which existed between Covenanters and Seceders were all stated and discussed with an ability which did credit to the debaters. The blood of the Covenanter Matthew Linn became stirred, and he concluded his speech with the following sentence: "You may agree to what propositions you please, but we Covenanters will agree to none but with this interpretation, that all power and ability civil rulers have are from Christ the Prophet of the Covenant, and all the food and raiment mankind enjoy are from Christ the Priest of the Covenant."

To something contained in this sentence some of the Associates formed serious objections. Surely it was not to the sentiment, for it is clearly defensible on the plainest Bible principles. Paul says, Ephesians I., 22, that God the Father "bath



put all things under His (Christ's) feet and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church." Certainly, Matthew Linn did not say more than Paul says, nor did he say anything contrary to what Paul says.

Since the parties could not agree upon the propositions now before the conference, it was agreed by a majority that Rev. Messrs. John Smith, Robert Annan, John Cuthbertson and Alexander Dobbin be appointed a committee to draw up other propositions. Every member of this committee was intensely anxious that the union of the two bodies be consummated at as early a day as possible. It is not asserting too much to say that they were men of more than ordinary ability.

In a very short time, the committee reported propositions which were acceptable to the majority, and formed the main part of the basis upon which the union was finally consummated.

Since the union which formed the Associate Reformed Church cannot be clearly understood unless the basis upon which that union was founded is known, all the propositions contained in that basis will now be stated in the order in which they were finally agreed upon and adopted :

1. That Jesus Christ died for the elect only.
2. That there is an appropriation in the nature of faith.
3. That the gospel is indiscriminately addressed to sinners of mankind.
4. That the righteousness of Christ is the alone proper condition of the covenant of grace.
5. That civil power originates from God the Creator, and not from Christ the Mediator.
6. That the administration of the Kingdom of Providence is committed to Jesus Christ the Mediator; and magistracy, the ordinance appointed by the moral Governor of the world to be the pillar or prop of civil order among men, as well as other things, is rendered subservient by the Mediator to the welfare of His spiritual kingdom, the Church, and beside the Church has the sanctified use of that and every common benefit, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.
7. That the law of nature and the moral law revealed in Scripture are substantially the same, although the latter expresses the will of God more evidently and clearly than the former; and therefore magistrates among Christians ought to be regulated by the general directory of the Word as to the execution of their offices in faithfulness and righteousness.
8. That the qualifications of justice, veracity, &c., required in the law of nature for the being of a magistrate, are also more explicitly and clearly revealed as necessary in Scripture. But a religious test any farther than an oath of fidelity can never be essentially necessary to the being of a magistrate, except when the people make it a condition of government; then it may be among that people necessary by their own voluntary deed.



9. That both parties, when united, shall adhere to the Westminster Confession of Faith; Catechisms, Larger and Shorter; Directory for Worship, and Propositions concerning Church Government.

10. That they shall claim the full exercise of church discipline without dependence on foreign judicatories.

To the consummation of the union upon the basis set forth in the above propositions, the majority of both parties were agreed. There were, however, quite a number of persons, both Covenanters and Associates, who were, it may safely be said, violently opposed to an union on any terms whatever, and there were others who were conscientiously opposed to it on the proposed basis.

That all parties might have time to reflect, and that all causes pending before any of the three presbyteries might be finally adjudicated, the union was not consummated at this conference. At New Perth (now Salem), New York, in the spring of 1780, the proposed basis of union was unanimously adopted by the Presbytery of New York. The same basis of union was unanimously adopted by the Reformed Presbytery, at a meeting held at Donegal, Pa., about the 1st of December, 1781. It was not, however, until the 13th of June, 1782, that the basis of union was accepted by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and then not unanimously, but by a bare majority. This was at Pequa, Pa.

There were several causes which had a direct tendency to delay the union on the part of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania.

The main reason, however, was the number and zeal of those who were opposed to the union. The majority of the ministers in connection with the presbytery finally went into the union. In fact, all the ministers, except James Clarkson and William Marshall, acceded to the basis of union. These two worthy men, together with Robert Hunter, James Thomson and Alexander Moore, ruling elders, protested and appealed to the Associate Synod of Scotland. Some of those who went into the union had, at times during the negotiations, opposed it, and at last, with some degree of reluctance, consented to its consummation. At any period during the five years' negotiations, there were in the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania a majority in favor of the union, but there were always some who were opposed to it on any and all terms.



There was another cause of delay on the part of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania in consummating the union. There were before the Presbytery a number of cases requiring adjudication. It was a general understanding among the parties that each Presbytery should adjust all matters of this kind before it entered the Union Church.

The 13th of June, 1782, marks the date of the union of the three presbyteries which formed the Associate Reformed Church. The formal consummation of the union, however, did not take place until Friday, the 1st of November, 1782. In the house of William Richards, on Wednesday, the 30th of October, the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, the Associate Presbytery of New York, and the Reformed Presbytery, met in convention in the city of Philadelphia, and for two days were engaged in making the necessary arrangements for the formal consummation of the long-desired union. On the 1st day of November, 1782, they met, and having chosen the Rev. John Mason moderator, in due form organized the Associate Reformed Synod. The following members were present: Of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania—James Proudfoot, John Rodgers, William Logan and John Smith, ministers; Joseph Miller and Thomas Douglass, ruling elders. Of the Associate Presbytery of New York—John Mason, Robert Annan, ministers; William McKinley, ruling elder. Of the Reformed Presbytery—John Cuthbertson, Matthew Linn and Alexander Dobbin, ministers; James Bell, John Cochran and Robert Paterson, M. D., ruling elders.

The names of those ministers constituting the Associate Reformed Synod at the period of its organization, were James Proudfoot, Matthew Henderson, John Mason, Robert Annan, John Smith, John Rodgers, Thomas Clark, William Logan, John Murray, David Annan, Associates; John Cuthbertson, Alexander Dobbin, Matthew Linn and David Telfair, Reformed Presbyterians—in all fourteen.

The only other ministers in connection with the Secession Church in America at the time the Associate Reformed Synod was organized were James Clarkson and William Marshall. Andrew Patton, who was received as a member of the Associate Presbytery at its meeting in New York, October 29, 1774, on credentials given by the Presbytery of Moyrah, Ireland,



was, in 1778, deposed, and the sentence of higher excommunication pronounced upon him on account of his scandalous conduct. James Martin, who, in August, 1775, presented to the Associate Presbytery in America credentials from the Presbytery of Moyrah, Ireland, was received into the Presbytery as an "ordained minister in good and regular standing," withdrew from the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania and connected himself with the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, now the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church.

So far as is known, there was only one minister in connection with the Reformed Presbytery who did not go into the union. This was the Rev. William Martin, of South Carolina. Mr. Martin came to America in perhaps the early part of 1772. He began his ministerial labors on Rocky Creek, Chester county, S. C., sometime in 1772. Unfortunately, among his many good and noble traits of Christian character, he had the bad habit, by far too common at that time, of indulging too freely in the social glass. For the sin of intemperance he was silenced, and consequently at the time the Associate Reformed Synod was organized he was not in good standing.

The design aimed at by those forming the Associate Reformed Church, was certainly praiseworthy. In America there were two denominations of Christians having the same Confession of Faith, and all whose forms of worship were, even to the smallest minutiae, the same. That these two denominations might coalesce, and form but one, certainly was the single and only purpose which those good men labored to effect. That they desired that this union should be effected in accordance with the plain principles of God's word, and thus redound to the glory of God in the propagation of the pure and unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ, no one will doubt who knows anything of the history of either the Associates or the Covenanters.

Pure and holy as was their motive, and arduous and indefatigable as were their efforts, they only partially succeeded. The union was formed, as we have seen, but as we have also seen, it was not a complete union. Two ministers, William Marshall and James Clarkson—the former pastor of the Associate congregation in the city of Philadelphia, and the latter pastor of the Associate Church in Guinston, York county, Pa.,



together with all, or nearly all, of the members of their congregations—rejected the basis of union and continued the existence of the Associate Presbytery. Notwithstanding the fact that all the ministers in connection with the Reformed Presbytery, and a very large majority of the ruling elders and lay members in connection with that church, went into the union, still there were some who could not see their way clear to unite with the Associates and thus form but one denomination. The result of the union was, contrary to that designed, the formation of another denomination, instead of organizing two into one. This was to be deplored, and if we take only a surface view of the subject, we will be ready to censure severely both Covenanters and Associates, who were instrumental in bringing about such a state of things. If, however, we will look into the matter more closely, and view it in the light of God's word and Providence, our conclusion will be of a far different character.

Parties, both in church and state, are to be deplored; but so long as the present condition of things remains, they are necessary. The people of God are at present no more prepared to be united into one ecclesiastical organization than the inhabitants of the world are prepared to be organized into one government. It will be most readily admitted that there is but one church, just as there is but one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, and that the divisions in the visible church have been produced by the enemy of all good. So we learn were the tares in the wheat. The husbandman sowed wheat, but the enemy sowed tares. It is the duty and privilege of all God's people to pray that these divisions in the church may be healed; but it is the province of the King and Head of the church to overrule them for his own glory and the good of all his people.

Generally, in union there is strength, but huge masses are not often pure, and frequently they are very weak. The little stream that noiselessly steals its way through a small fissure in the rock is clear and sparkling, while the waters collected in majestic rivers are turbid. There is a moral strength in purity which is not in union. In the church, purity is first. The order established by its divine Head is "first pure, then peaceable." The existence of three Christian denominations



which resulted from the organization of the Associate Reformed Church, rather than one formed by the union of two, was attended by some evils, but it was certainly not without some good results.

William Marshall and James Clarkson went to work with that zeal and energy and self-sacrifice which has ever characterized Associate ministers. The fragments of the Associate Presbytery were gathered up and reorganized, and with the blessing of God the old church grew and waxed strong. It did this under the most unfavorable circumstances. Thus it continued until 1858—a period of seventy-six years—when its twenty-one Presbyteries, three hundred and twenty-six ministers and licentiates, and twenty-three thousand five hundred and five communicants went into the union which formed the United Presbyterian Church of North America. The few Covenanters who did not go into the union formed themselves into Societies, and with the moral heroism of martyrs, they clung to the covenanting principles of their illustrious ancestors. They petitioned the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland for ministerial assistance. This, in due time, was granted, and a kind and merciful God continues to preserve in America the Covenanter, with all the main features which marked him during the reign of William and Mary.

The Associate, Associate Reformed and the Covenanter Churches were to each other at least an incentive to action. More than this. They prevented each other from pursuing devious courses.

What, it is asked, is the present mission of the Covenanter Church in America? Nothing! is the prompt and positive reply which comes from the whole of the American people, except a fractional part, too small to be estimated. The multitude, both in church and state, find in the members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church fit objects for their derisive scorn. Notwithstanding all this, there is something picturesquely grand in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and it has, in the providence of God, a mission to fill; otherwise, it would not have been preserved for more than two hundred years. The continued existence in America of the Reformed Presbyterian, of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian, and of the United Presbyterian Churches, affords an example of God's preserving grace almost without a parallel.



Every other denomination of Christians in America has departed from its old landmarks and become modernized and Americanized. Not only so; but the prevailing effort is to discard the old and adopt something new. The Seceders and Covenanters only have weathered the storms of innovation. They have been stigmatized as "Scotch bigots," as "a peculiar people not reckoned with the nation." Infidels and worldlings have exhausted their resources of wit and sarcasm that they might present these "Scotch people" as objects of derision; and many, professing to be followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, have lent these infidels and worldlings a helping hand. Still, Scotch Presbyterianism, in all its rugged features, is believed and taught by Seceders and Covenanters in America, and Seceders and Covenanters form an important factor in the American government.

It often happens in this world that the profits and honors of useful inventions and remarkable discoveries are not bestowed upon the rightful persons. The Western Continent does not bear the name of its discoverer, and multitudes of inventors have died in obscurity and bequeathed to their offspring a heritage of squalid poverty. The Declaration of American Independence and the Queensferry Paper breathe the same spirit. The former is but the development of the latter. Henry Hall and Donald Cargill were the authors of the Queensferry Paper; and either Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia, or Hezekiah James Balch, of North Carolina, was the author of the Declaration of Independence. Every idea contained in the Declaration of American Independence, no matter who wrote it, is contained in the following single sentence in the Queensferry Paper: "We do declare that we shall set up over ourselves and over what God shall give us power of, government and governors according to the word of God; that we shall no more commit the government of ourselves and the making of laws for us to any one single person, this kind of government being most liable to inconveniences and aptest to degenerate into tyranny." This "rash declaration," as it was called at the time, by even the friends of liberty and the foes of tyrants, was put in circulation long before Jefferson or Balch was born.



To Donald Cargill, Richard Cameron, Ebenezer Erskine, Adam Gib, John McMillan and their coadjutors, the American people are largely indebted for their liberty; and these men first and most clearly, since the cessation of the ancient Jewish Theocracy, demonstrated to the world that there can be a church without a bishop, and a government without a king.



## CHAPTER XI.

PRESBYTERIES REARRANGED—New Names Given Them—Presbytery of Londonderry—Its Members—Character of the Congregations in Connection With the Presbytery of Londonderry—Synod Disclaim all Responsibility for its Acts—Joins the Synod of Albany—Organization of the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia—Organization of the Presbyteries Previous to 1822—Four Synods Organized—First Meeting of the General Synod—Members Present—Education of Candidates for the Ministry—Theological Seminary Founded—John M. Mason Sent to Europe in Behalf of the Theological Seminary—His Success—Returns Home Accompanied by Five Ministers and One Probationer—John M. Mason Chosen Professor of Theology—Other Theological Seminaries in America—Growth of the General Synod—Disturbing Elements—Associate Reformed Church in a Formative State—Confession of Faith Adopted in 1799—Sections of the Scotch Confession Not Adopted—Finally Amended—Deliverence of the Synod Concerning Testimonies—The Little Constitution—Westminster Confession of Faith Defective—Not Adopted as a Whole by the Associate Reformed Church—First and Second Books of Discipline—Changes Made in the Westminster Confession of Faith by the Associate Reformed Church—The Overture Published—Its Object—Matthew Henderson Withdraws—Diversity of Opinions Among the Fathers of the Associate Reformed Church—John Smith's Difficulty—Judicial Testimonies Demanded—Synod Refused to Prepare a Testimony—Confession of Faith of the Associate Reformed Church.

Previous to the adjournment of the meeting at which the Associate Reformed Church was formally organized, the three presbyteries constituting the Union Church were re-arranged, their boundaries fixed, and their old names dropped. They were designated The First, The Second and The Third. The First Associate Reformed Presbytery embraced all the congregations in the State of Pennsylvania east of the Susquehanna river. The ministers in connection with it were John Cuthbertson, David Telfair, James Proudfoot and John Smith.

The Second Associate Reformed Presbytery consisted of the following ministers, viz.: Matthew Henderson, John Rogers, John Murray, William Logan, Matthew Linn and Alexander Dobbin. Its territory embraced all Pennsylvania west of the Susquehanna river. This Presbytery was a continuation of the old Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania.



The Third Associate Reformed Presbytery consisted of the congregations in New York and the Eastern States. The ministers were John Mason, Robert Annan, David Annan and Thomas Clark. It will be seen that the First and Second were organized from the Reformed Presbytery and the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and that the Third was simply the Associate Presbytery of New York, the name being changed.

The territorial limits of all these Presbyteries were, within the period of about four years, readjusted and the names again changed. The First was changed to that of New York. The Second received the name, Presbytery of Pennsylvania. The Third Presbytery was, in 1786, divided. Two of its ministers, John Mason and James Proudfoot, with their congregations and contiguous vacancies, were annexed to the newly formed Presbytery of New York, and the congregations in New England were constituted into a presbytery which was designated the Presbytery of Londonderry. The ministers in connection with the Presbytery of Londonderry were David Annan, William Morrison and Samuel Taggart. In 1791 the Synod, at the request of David Annan, changed the name to "Presbytery of New England," but it was rarely so designated. The pastoral charges in connection with the Presbytery of Londonderry, or New England, were all in the New England States. David Annan was pastor of Peterborough, Hillsborough county, New Hampshire. He was intemperate in his habits, vulgar in his conversation and abusive to his wife and children, on which latter account his wife divorced him. In 1800 he was deposed from the ministry, after which he went to Ireland and died in 1802. Samuel Taggart was pastor of the congregation of Cole-raine, Franklin county, Massachusetts. In 1803 he was elected a member of Congress, and for a period of fourteen years devoted his attention mainly to politics. William Morrison, afterwards Dr. Morrison, was pastor of the congregation of Londonderry, New Hampshire. The congregations in connection with the Presbytery of Londonderry were all, or nearly all, disaffected congregations, received into the Associate Reformed Synod from other denominations. The majority of these never were in full accord with the principles and practices of the Associate Reformed Church. The result was, that in 1801, the Presbytery of Londonderry was, "on account of defections



from the principles of the Church, and insubordination to the Synod," declared to be no longer in connection with the Associate Reformed Synod. At the same time the Associate Reformed Synod "disclaimed all responsibility for any of its transactions." Cut off from the Associate Reformed Synod, it remained in the odd capacity of an independent presbytery until 1809, when it was received into the Synod of Albany in connection with the Presbyterian Church.

The next Associate Reformed Presbytery which was organized was "The Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia." This organization was effected at Long Cane, Abbeville county, S. C., on the 24th of February, 1790. There were present at the organization: Thomas Clark, Peter McMullan, John Boyse, David Bothwell, ordained ministers; and James Rogers, licentiate; and James McBride and William Dunlap, ruling elders. The territory embraced by the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia was the States of North and South Carolina and Georgia.

Previous to the year 1822, there were in connection with the Associate Reformed Church thirteen presbyteries. These were, in addition to those already mentioned: The Second Presbytery of Pennsylvania, organized at Yough Meeting-house, June 24th, 1793. Ministers—Matthew Henderson, John Jamieson, Adam Rankin and Robert Warwick. Territory—all west of the Allegheny Mountains. The Presbytery of Washington was organized on the 14th of July, 1794. Ministers—James Proudfoot, John Dunlap, George Mairs and James Mairs. On the 7th of October, 1799, Robert Warwick, Adam Rankin and John Steele, members of the Second Pennsylvania Presbytery, living in the State of Kentucky, were, together with a ruling elder from each of their pastoral charges, appointed by the presbytery to which they belonged, a "committee to meet from time to time and transact such presbyterial business as might come before them." On the 20th of May, 1800, the Synod so far sanctioned this apparently irregular act of the presbytery as "to adopt an order for the organization of the Presbytery of Kentucky, at such time and place as may be agreed upon." Rev. Adam Rankin was appointed to preach the sermon usual on such occasions. The organization was effected, but the precise date is not known.



The Second Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia was organized at Cedar Spring, Abbeville county, S. C., on the 8th of April, 1801. The ministers in connection with this presbytery were: Alexander Porter, William Dixon, Peter McMullan and David Bothwell. Its territory was all west of Broad River.

Big Spring Presbytery was organized at Fermanagh, Pennsylvania, on the 18th of May, 1803. The ministers in connection with it were: William Logan, John Young, Thomas Smith, James Walker, James McConnell, William Baldrige and James Harper, Jr. Its territory was Cumberland Valley and adjacent counties and south to the James River.

On the 23d of May, 1803, at Rock Creek, Pa., the Presbytery of Philadelphia was organized. The ministers in connection with it were: Robert Annan, Alexander Dobbin and Ebenezer Dickey. Its territory was eastward of the Cumberland Valley.

The Presbytery of Saratoga was organized at Broadalbin, New York, on the 11th of October, 1808. The following ministers, viz: James Mairs, William McAuley, John Burns and Robert Proudfoot, were in connection with it. The territory assigned it was north of Orange county and west of the Hudson River.

The Presbytery of Ohio was organized at Xenia, Ohio, on the 9th of April, 1817, from the Presbytery of Kentucky. The actual division, however, did not take place until the 1st of January, 1818. The ministers assigned to the Presbytery of Ohio were William Baldrige, Alexander Porter, David Risk, Samuel Carothers, John McFarland and Abraham Craig. All the southwestern part of the State of Ohio was included within the territorial limits of this presbytery.

In the course of time, the territorial limits of nearly all the presbyteries were changed. One—Londonderry—ceased to have any connection with the Associate Reformed Church, and the names of several were changed, and a few were divided. For a period of twenty years no change was made in the Associate Reformed Synod. The number of congregations rapidly increased, new presbyteries were organized, and the field occupied by the Associate Reformed Church became very extensive, embracing the territory included by nearly all the original thirteen States forming the American Government.



On the 22d of October, 1802, it was determined to organize from the original Synod four coördinate Synods. On the 30th of October, 1802, the original Associate Reformed Synod was dissolved. Before its dissolution, however, the necessary arrangements were made for organizing four Synods, to be known respectively as the Synod of New York, the Synod of Pennsylvania, the Synod of the Carolinas and the Synod of Scioto. The Synod of New York was organized at Newburgh, N. Y., on the 27th of May, 1803. It was composed of the Presbyteries of New York and Washington.

The Presbyteries of Philadelphia and Big Spring, were, at Marsh Creek, Pa., on the 25th of May, 1803, organized into a synod called the Synod of Pennsylvania.

The Synod of the Carolinas was organized at Little River, now Ebenezer, Fairfield county, S. C., on the 9th of May, 1803. The presbyteries subordinate to this synod were the First and Second Presbyteries of the Carolinas and Georgia. On the 2d of May, 1804, at Chillicothe, Ohio, the Synod of Scioto was organized. It was composed of the Presbyteries of Monongahela (originally the Second Presbytery of Pennsylvania) and Kentucky.

These four synods were subordinate to a general synod to be constituted by representatives chosen from the presbyteries, as follows :

“Every presbytery containing not more than two ministers, shall be entitled to send one minister and one elder; and for every three ministers above that number, one minister and one elder more. This proportion shall be preserved till the number of delegates exceed thirty; after which each presbytery consisting of more than ten ministers, shall, for every four additional ministers, be entitled to send one minister and one elder.”

On Wednesday, the 30th of May, 1804, twenty-two representatives from the eight presbyteries composing the four Synods, met at Greencastle, Pa. The Rev. John M. Mason, in the absence of the Rev. Robert Annan, took the chair, and after preaching a sermon from the text: “Hold fast the faithful word,” &c., Titus, 1: 9, constituted by prayer, THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA. The court, when organized, consisted of the following members:



SYNOD OF NEW YORK, *Presbytery of Washington*.—George Mairs, Alexander Proudfoot and Robert Proudfoot, ministers; and Ebenezer Clark, John Magoffin and John Rowan, ruling elders. John Rowan was absent.

*Presbytery of New York*.—John M. Mason and John McJimsey, ministers. Two ruling elders—George Lindsay and John Shaw—were chosen to represent the Presbytery of New York, but neither attended.

SYNOD OF PENNSYLVANIA, *Presbytery of Philadelphia*.—Alexander Dobbin and Ebenezer Dickey, ministers; Donald Catnach and John Morrow, ruling elders.

*Presbytery of Big Spring*.—Thomas Smith and James McConnell, ministers; John Gabby and James McLenaghan, ruling elders.

SYNOD OF SCIOTO, *Presbytery of Kentucky*.—Adam Rankin, minister; and Thomas Meek, ruling elder.

*Presbytery of Monongahela*.—John Riddell (absent) and David Proudfoot, ministers; John Patterson and James Findlay, ruling elders.

SYNOD OF THE CAROLINAS, *First Presbytery*.—John Hemphill, minister. No ruling elder was appointed.

*Second Presbytery*.—James McGill, minister. No ruling elder was appointed.

The Rev. Alexander Dobbin was chosen Moderator and the Rev. James Gray, Clerk. Previous to the organization of the GENERAL SYNOD of the Associate Reformed Church, the number of vacancies had greatly increased, and their petitions for the ordinances of God's house, although earnest, could not be answered by the Synod. There was a great demand for preaching, and only a few preachers to perform the work. In the years preceding the organization of the Associate Reformed Church, the Associate Presbytery, as well as the Reformed Presbytery, depended upon the judicatories in Europe for their supply of ministers. The course pursued by both these gave, at the time, great offense to the judicatories in Scotland and Ireland, and partially barred even friendly intercourse between them and the Associate Reformed Synod.



All the old ministers of both the Covenanter and Associate Presbyteries, in America, were men of superior intellectual endowments, finished classical scholars, and thoroughly trained theologians. Of this statement there are many incontrovertible proofs.

Having been well educated themselves, these old fathers of the Associate Reformed Church were able to appreciate the advantages of an education, and were unwilling to admit any one to preach the gospel whom they did not consider qualified to instruct those among whom, in the providence of God, they might be called to labor.

For the first fifteen years after its organization, most of the candidates in the ministry in the Associate Reformed Church received both their literary and theological training in Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa. This college was founded in 1783. Its first president was the Rev. Dr. Charles Nisbet, a native of Scotland. At the request of a number of young men, graduates of the college, who had the gospel ministry in view, Dr. Nisbet delivered a course of lectures on *Systematic Theology*. The candidates for the ministry in the Associate Reformed Church usually, while in college, attended these lectures. No doubt, the Associate Reformed Presbyteries entrusted the training of their theological students to Dr. Nisbet because of the fact that he was known to be, both in Scotland and America, a member of the *Orthodox* party.

Some, perhaps all, or nearly all the ministers licensed by the Associate Reformed Church, during the first eighteen years, studied privately. Each pastor was a theological professor, and his humble dwelling a theological seminary. Alexander Dobbin, John Mason, Matthew Linn, John Smith and Robert Annan, rendered the church an important service in training young men for the ministry.

In such a system of theological training, there was, no doubt, something defective, but not so great as is, perhaps, generally supposed. The system which reduces theory promptly to practice, is not very defective. The most objectionable feature connected with the mode of theological training in existence during the early period of the Associate Reformed Church, was that it imposed upon pastors a very onerous burden. In addition to this, when one denomination of Christians entrusts the



training of its theological students, either in part or in whole, to members of another denomination, it places its own distinctive doctrines and practices in eminent peril, and opens wide the door that defections from doctrine and laxity in practice may pour in like a flood.

To remedy all defects, remove all objections and prevent all evils connected with the existing mode of training candidates for the ministry, and at the same time increase the number of able ministers, the Associate Reformed Church, as early as 1796, began to direct its attention to the founding of a theological seminary. It was not, however, until 1801 that the matter assumed a tangible form. The subject had, on several occasions, been before the Synod, but the impoverished and demoralized condition of the country, on account of the war, had, up to this time, retarded all visible progress. The matter was put into the hands of a committee. The report of that committee was taken up by the Synod on the 2d of June, 1801. We cannot better express the mind of the Synod on this subject than by quoting its own minute, which is as follows :

“Took up the report of the committee for devising a plan of supply to the vacancies ; and, after the most serious deliberations, came to the following conclusion :

1. That a minister of this Church be sent to Great Britain and Ireland, or either of them, to procure a competent number of evangelical ministers and probationers, and that his expenses be defrayed from the Synodical fund.

2. That he be authorized to secure a number of pious and intelligent students of divinity, who shall engage to repair, after the completion of their studies, to the United States, and place themselves under the direction of this Synod.

3. That he be further authorized and enjoined to solicit donations in money, for the purpose of erecting and maintaining a theological seminary for the education of youth for the holy ministry.

4. That, according as the moneys in his hand shall permit, he be also authorized to purchase a library for said seminary ; and collection of those books which are most needful and useful for this Synod, to be distributed among their ministers and students, as shall hereafter be directed ; using the advice and counsel of judicious and godly ministers with regard to the selection ; and that he solicit donations in books for both these uses.”

The Rev. John M. Mason was the person selected to discharge the duties imposed by the above resolutions. For such a mission he was eminently well qualified. In less than two months after his appointment he set sail for Europe, and on the 2d of September landed at Greenock. He was absent about fifteen months, during which time he collected about five thou-



sand dollars. Nearly all this amount he expended in the purchase of books for the use of the contemplated seminary. He was also successful in prevailing upon five ministers and one probationer to come to the assistance of the Associate Reformed Synod. A few days after the return of Mr. Mason (October, 1802), the Synod convened in the city of New York. Mr. Mason met with it, and gave in a detailed account of his agency. The concluding sentence of his report is as follows :

“The business of the mission having been brought to a close, toward the end of August, I lost no time in preparing for my return, and on the 1st of September sailed from Greenock, in company with the Rev. Messrs. James Scrimgeour, Alexander Calderhead, Robert Forest, Robert Easton, James Lawrie, ministers; and Robert Hamilton Bishop, probationer; who, having had a prosperous voyage, by the will of God, are now present to tender their services to the churches.”

At the first meeting of the General Synod, in 1804, the Rev. John M. Mason was chosen professor of divinity, and the city of New York fixed upon as the proper place for the seminary.

This was the second theological seminary established in America. Andover, Massachusetts, was established in 1808, and Princeton, New Jersey, in 1812. Twelve years previous, however, to the founding of the Associate Reformed Theological Seminary, the Associate Presbytery—those who did not coalesce with the Covenanters—established a theological seminary in Beaver county, Pa. This was the first theological seminary established in America. The Rev. John Anderson—afterward Dr. John Anderson—was its first professor. For a period of twenty-seven years, or from 1792 to 1819, he continued, single and alone, to discharge acceptably and profitably the onerous duties of his responsible office.

For several years peace and harmony reigned in the General Synod, and the Associate Reformed Church seemed to be receiving a constant outpouring of the Spirit. All was not, however, peace and harmony. There were, as the sequel will show, a number of occurrences which disturbed the tranquility of the moment. In fact, there was in the Associate Reformed Church, from the period of its organization in 1782, up to 1822, an apparent want of stability. For nearly one half of this time it was in what may with some propriety be called a formative state. It was not until the 31st of May, 1799, that the Confession of Faith of the Associate Reformed Church was adopted.



At its first meeting, in 1782, the Associate Reformed Synod, "after serious deliberation and solemn prayer," unanimously adopted the following articles:

I. It is the resolution of this Synod to persevere in adhering to the system of truth contained in the Holy Scriptures, exhibited in the Confession of Faith, Catechisms—Larger and Shorter—and to the fundamental principles of gospel worship and ecclesiastical government agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, with the assistance of commissioners from the Church of Scotland. This Declaration, however, does not extend to the following sections of the Confession of Faith which define the power of civil government in relation to religion: Chapter XX. Section 4; Chapter XXIII. Section 3; Chapter XXXI, Section 2. These Sections are reserved for a candid discussion on some future occasion, as God shall be pleased to direct. Nor is it to be construed as a resignation of our rights to adjust the circumstances of public worship and ecclesiastical policy to the station in which Divine Providence may place us. All the members of the Synod acknowledge in the meanwhile that they are under the most sacred obligations to avoid unnecessary criticism upon any of these excellent treatises, which would have a native tendency to weaken their attachment to the truths therein contained. If any of the members of the Synod shall conceive any scruples at any Article or Articles of the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Directory of Worship, or Form of Presbyterian Church Government, or shall think they have sufficient reason to make objections thereto, they shall have full liberty to communicate their scruples or objections to their brethren, who shall consider them with impartiality, meekness and patience, and endeavor to remove them by calm, dispassionate reasoning. No kind of censure shall be inflicted in cases of this nature unless those scrupling and objecting brethren shall disturb the peace of the Church by publishing their opinions to the people, or by urging them in judicatories with irritating and schismatic zeal.

II. The ministers and elders in Synod assembled also declare their hearty approbation of the earnest contendings for the faith and magnanimous sufferings in its defense, by which our pious ancestors were enabled to distinguish themselves in the last two centuries; that they have an affectionate remembrance of the National Covenant of Scotland, and of the Solemn League and Covenant of Scotland, England and Ireland, as well-intended engagements to support the cause of civil and religious liberty, and hold themselves bound by divine authority to practice all the moral duties therein contained according to their circumstances. That public and explicit covenanting with God is a moral duty under the gospel dispensation, to which they are resolved to attend, as He shall be pleased to direct. That it is their real intention to carry with them all the judicial testimonies against defections from the faith once delivered to the saints, which have been emitted in the present age by their brethren in Scotland as far as these testimonies serve to display the truth, and comport with the circumstances of our church, and that they will avail themselves of every call to bear appointed testimony against the errors and delusions which prevail in this country.

III. The members of Synod also acknowledge with gratitude that they are bound to honor the religious denominations in Britain to which they belonged, on account of their zeal for the purity of the gospel and of those laudable efforts



to promote it, not only in Britain and Ireland, but also in America, and they profess an unfeigned desire to hold an amicable correspondence with all or any of them, and to concur with them in every just and eligible measure for promoting true and undefiled religion.

IV. It is also the resolution of this Synod never to introduce, nor suffer to be introduced in their church, the local controversy about the civil establishment of Presbyterian religion, and the religious clause of some Burgess oaths in Scotland, or any unnecessary disputes about the origin of civil dominion, and requisites for rendering it legal in circumstances dissimilar to those in which themselves are placed. They esteem themselves bound to detach their religious profession from all foreign connections, and to honor the civil powers of America, conscientiously submitting to them in all their lawful operations.

V. That the abuse of ecclesiastical censures may be effectually prevented, the following *General Rule of Discipline is unanimously adopted*, namely : That notorious violations of the law of God, and such errors in doctrine as un-hinge the Christian profession, shall be the only scandals for which deposition and excommunication shall be passed, and that the highest censures of other offenders shall be a dissolution of the connection between the Synod and the offender.

VI. The terms of admission to fixed communion with the Synod shall be soundness of faith as defined in the above-mentioned Confession and Catechisms, submission to the Government and discipline of the Church and a holy conversation.

VII. The members of Synod also acknowledge it to be their duty to treat pious persons of other denominations with great affection and tenderness. They are willing, as God affordeth opportunity, to extend communion to all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus in conformity to His will. But as occasional communion in a divided state of the church may produce great disorders, if it be not conducted with much wisdom and moderation, they esteem themselves and the people under their inspection inviolably bound, in all ordinary cases, to submit to every restriction of their liberty, which general edification renders necessary. This article, however, is not to be construed as a license to encourage vagrant preachers who go about under pretence of extraordinary zeal and devotion, and are not subject to the government and discipline of any regular church.

VIII. As the principles of the Synod are detached from the local peculiarities by which the most considerable parts of Presbyterians have been distinguished, it is further agreed to reject all such applications for admissions to fixed communion with the Synod that may at any time be made by persons belonging to other denominations of Presbyterians, as evidently arise from caprice, personal prejudice, or any other schismatical principles, and that the only admissible application shall be such as shall, upon deliberate examination, be found to arise from a solid conviction of duty, and to discover Christian meekness towards the party whose communion is relinquished, or such as are made by considerable bodies of people who are not only destitute of a fixed gospel ministry, but cannot be reasonably provided for by the denomination of Presbyterians to which they belong. It is, however, thought proper that applications of the last kind shall not be admitted till the bodies by whom they are admitted



shall previously inform the judicatories which have the immediate inspection of them of the reasons of their intended application, and shall use all due means to obtain the concurrence of that judicatory.

The above articles were afterwards revised, and in some particulars slightly amended, and in connection with the Basis of Union, published under the title: The "Constitution of the Associate Reformed Church." They were known as "The Little Constitution."

Whoever will read the articles which made the "Little Constitution," in connection with the Basis of Union, will discover that the founders of the Associate Reformed Church endeavored to avoid some of the grave errors into which both Associates and Covenanters, both in America and Europe, had fallen. The Westminster Confession of Faith, with all its excellencies, was regarded by them as defective. This is manifest from the fact that one Section in each of three chapters was not adopted, but "reserved for a candid discussion on some future occasion."

This reservation excited a feeling akin to suspicion in the minds of some. To question, some thought, one principle laid down in the Westminster Confession of Faith, was to ignore the whole. This was a gratuitous assumption—a conclusion reached without a knowledge of the facts.

The parts of the Westminster Confession of Faith not adopted by the Synod of the Associate Reformed Church, all referred to the powers of the civil magistrate. The Church of Scotland, the mother of all the Presbyterian Churches in the world, was a National Church, and in some of its features anti-Presbyterian. This is not to be thought strange. The wonder is that so great attainments were made by the Church of Scotland, and that she retained so little of papal corruptions. In the First Book of Discipline, prepared in 1560, by the justly celebrated John Knox, there is something that savors of Erastianism in almost every paragraph. It is decidedly anti-papal and anti-prelatic, but it is not, strictly speaking, Presbyterian. It resembles more the code of a tyrant than a system of laws and regulations by which freemen in Christ Jesus are to be governed. It certainly was adapted to the time at which it was formulated, but is totally unfit for a people far advanced in scriptural knowledge.



The Second Book of Discipline, adopted in 1581, was in advance, in some particulars, of the first; in others it was not. In neither was the church and state kept separate and distinct. Most evidently was there an effort, strong and praiseworthy, in that direction; but it was the effort of men just emerging from the darkness of popery and living under a monarchical government. The Westminster Confession of Faith is far in advance of any similar production which preceded it. The Scotch Commissioners, Henderson and Gillespie, may, with some modification, be said to be its authors. It is a monument of wisdom and piety, and in the main is without an objection, because it is strictly scriptural. Still, the Westminster Confession of Faith is defective. So thought the fathers of the Associate Reformed Church, and so think all their descendants.

These defects are confined exclusively to those Sections which treat, either directly or indirectly, of the powers and prerogatives of the civil magistrate. In Chapter XX. of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the subject treated of is "Christian liberty and liberty of conscience." The objectionable feature in the fourth Section of this chapter is that it declares that those who "resist the ordinance of God may be lawfully called to an account and proceeded against both by the church and by the *civil magistrate*."

In Section third of Chapter XXIII. it is made the duty of the civil magistrate "to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the church; that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed; all corruptions and abuses in worship or discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed, to the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God." Section second of Chapter XXXI. recognizes the right of civil magistrates to convene synods and councils, but reserves the right to ministers to do this when the civil magistrate is an open enemy of the church. These three Sections of the Westminster Confession of Faith were not adopted by the Associate Reformed Church, because they are clearly anti-Presbyterian. They were considered, not hastily, but calmly and dispassionately, for a period of more than sixteen years, and



amended, and finally, on the 31st of May, 1799, adopted as they now stand in the Confession of Faith of the Associate Reformed Church. The only other change which was made was the substituting of the word *authorizing* for "tolerating" in the catalogue of sins contained in the answer to the 139th question of the Larger Catechism. This last change, however, is not always observed.

Whoever will carefully compare the Confession of Faith of the Associate Reformed Church with the Westminster Confession of Faith will be convinced that the fathers of the Associate Reformed Church acted wisely in making the reservation they did make, and that in amending the Sections referred to, they showed that they had clear and distinct ideas of pure Presbyterianism, and that they freed the Westminster Confession of Faith from Erastianism, and severed the church from the state in its government and discipline.

It will also be observed that the Associate Reformed Church avoided the issuing of Testimonies. This was common in both branches of the church from which she was descended. Both Associates and Covenanters had covenant bonds and judicial testimonies which they regarded as of equal importance with the Confession of Faith itself, and sometimes apparently of more importance. These Covenant bonds and Judicial Testimonies were made tests of Christian character, and an assent to them made a term of communion. The Associate Reformed Church began its existence without any of these. Those who did not correctly understand her position charged her with "burying the Covenants."

There was a demand on the part of some of her own people for a testimony. This the Synod studiously avoided. An "Illustration and Defense of the Westminster Confession of Faith," prepared by order of Synod, in 1785, was printed in 1787, but was not judicially adopted, but simply recommended as "an excellent and instructive illustration and application of those truths unto the present state of the Church of Christ in America."

The committee appointed to prepare this "Illustration and Defense" consisted of Robert Annan, John Smith and John Mason. It is mainly the production of Robert Annan. The design contemplated in preparing this "Overture," as it has



always been called, seems to have been two-fold: one was to hush the clamor for a Testimony; and the other, and no doubt the main design, was to ascertain the mind of the Synod in reference to the "excepted" Sections of the Westminster Confession of Faith. In other words, it was designed to be a movement in the direction of formulating and rendering permanent the subordinate Standards of the Associate Reformed Church.

While this overture was under consideration, in 1789, the Rev. Matthew Henderson handed in the following paper, signed by himself, John Smith and William Logan:

Will the Synod approve the judicial Act and Testimony of the Associate Presbytery of Scotland, and their Act concerning the doctrine of Grace? Will the Synod adopt the Declaration made by the Associate Presbytery respecting civil dominion and the qualifications necessary to the being of a magistrate? Do the Synod think that the renovation of the Covenant in the Secession is a renovation of the National Covenant and Solemn League? Do the Synod profess themselves to be under the formal obligation of these covenants, considered as ecclesiastical deeds? Will the Synod give up the scheme of occasional communion in all ordinary cases, and confine the privilege to the members of our own church?

An effort was made in an extra-judicial conference to satisfy the minds of these brethren. Having failed, Mr. Henderson withdrew from the Associate Reformed Church and returned to the Associate Presbytery. In the autumn of 1795 John Smith followed his example.

It is evident that during the formative period of the Associate Reformed Church there was some diversity of opinion on several points. Mr. Henderson left her communion because she would not approve and adopt all that the Associate Presbytery of Scotland had approved and adopted, and give up the scheme of occasional communion. In the case of Mr. Henderson there can be little if any doubt that he acted from anything but pure motives. In the case of Mr. Smith it is probable that he left the Associate Reformed Church partly, at least, because he did not obtain the pastorate of the congregation in New York, left vacant by the death, in 1792, of Dr. John Mason.

It is clear that some, at least, of the Associate Reformed fathers were, at first, partially in favor of adopting a Judicial Testimony. This was traceable to the bias of early education and the influence of the past history of the Associate and Cov-



enanter Churches. A moment's reflection, it would seem, would have satisfied any one who was not blinded by prejudices that the matter of preparing a Judicial Testimony was attended with insuperable difficulties. The longer this matter was considered, and the more it was discussed, the greater became the embarrassment.

It seems strange at this day that any one would ever, in America, after the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, have insisted upon the adoption of the Solemn League and Covenant. That instrument will stand as one of the grandest monuments of the past. It marks an epoch in the history of the church which will never be forgotten; but it is strikingly national in its character, and the peculiar circumstances which made its approval at one time well nigh a matter of necessity have long ago passed away.

To place themselves in a proper light before the world, the Synod of the Associate Reformed Church, in 1797, adopted the following paper:

*Whereas*, A number of people, under the inspection of the Associate Reformed Synod, entertain doubts as to their principles and intentions with respect to the maintenance of a faithful testimony for the truth as it is in Jesus; and whereas, these doubts are accompanied with anxiety for a judicial publication, copiously illustrating and defending the doctrines of the gospel; and enumerating, refuting and condemning errors and heresies, to be called a **TESTIMONY**, *the ministers and elders in Synod assembled* think it incumbent on them to explain, and by this Act they do explain their real views of these interesting subjects.

Upright and open testimony for the truths of the Lord's word, whether relating to doctrine, worship or manners, is the indispensable duty of all Christians, especially of the ministers and judicatories of the church, who, from their office, ought to be set for the defense of the gospel.

Judicial testimonies being designed to operate against error, are, lest they should miss their aim, to be wisely adapted to the immediate circumstances of the church.

Both these principles have been fully recognized by the Synod, in their published Act of May, 1790, entitled *An Act to amend the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod*. They therein declare that "they consider the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Directory for Worship, and Form of Church Government, as therein received, as their **FIXED TESTIMONY**, by which their principles are to be tried; or, as the judicial expression of the sense in which they understand the Holy Scriptures in the relation they have to the doctrine, the worship and government of the Christian church, and that it is their resolution to emit *occasional testimonies*, in *particular acts*, against errors and delusions. The Synod, however, being frequently importuned to publish a



testimony of a different kind, renewed from time to time, their discussions on this point, and after the most impartial and serious deliberation, find it not their duty to recede from the above resolution."

For the satisfaction of those who have not had the means to ascertain the grounds of this decision, some of them are subjoined:

1. In her excellent Confession of Faith, Catechisms, &c., the church is already possessed of a testimony so scriptural, concise, comprehensive and perspicuous, that the Synod despair of seeing it materially improved, and are convinced that the most eligible and useful method of maintaining the truths therein exhibited, is *occasionally* to elucidate them and direct them in particular acts against particular errors, as circumstances require.

2. There was drawn up and published by a committee of Synod, in the year 1787, *An Overture for illustrating and defending the doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith*. And in May, 1790, Synod unanimously resolved that said overture is, "in substance an excellent and instructive illustration and application of these truths unto the present state of the Church of Christ in America," and warmly recommended it as such to all the people under their inspection. Whatever there might be effected on a general scale, by any similar pamphlet, in the form of a Judicial Testimony, may be effected by that overture. And to emit such a testimony would only be to repeat the same laborious and expensive work, without obtaining any proportional advantage.

3. Could a Testimony universally acceptable be prepared, it would still be far from producing those beneficial effects which are so fondly expected:

a. If it were to do tolerable justice to the prodigious extent of the Confession, it would swell into an immense work, of which the very bulk would defeat the intention. And if it were comprised in a volume suited to the leisure of an ordinary reader, it would be defective, and defective, perhaps, on those very points on which the occurrences of a few months might require it to be particular and full.

b. It could scarcely give a correcter view of the principles of the Synod than is already given in their received Confession, because it could scarcely hold forth any truths which are not therein held forth, or state them, upon the whole, with more luminous precision. The opinion that such a testimony is needful to ascertain the Synod's principles is a direct impeachment of the Confession itself; since, if they are not sufficiently ascertained by this, it must be either lame or ambiguous; and then the church demands not a separate testimony, but an *amended* Confession. If any parts of it are differently interpreted and abused to the promotion of error, these ought to be explained in detached acts, and such explanation belongs strictly to the province of *occasional testimonies*.

c. It could not deter from application for ministerial or Christian communion with the Synod any who are not really friendly to the doctrines of grace, since one who can profess an attachment to the Confession of Faith while he is secretly hostile to its truths, is too far advanced in dishonesty to be impeded, for a moment, by any testimony which the wisdom of man can frame.

d. It could not silence the objections and cavils of such as incline to misrepresent the principles and character of the Synod, since it is impossible to satisfy, with anything, those who are determined to be satisfied with nothing.



The very uncandid manner in which the Synod have already been often treated, both in Britain and America, leaves little reason to hope their plainest declarations will not be perverted, and their most upright intentions misconstrued.

*e.* It could not lift up a *perpetual* banner for truth, since from the ever-fluctuating state of religious controversy, and the impossibility of foreseeing the different shapes which error may assume, some parts of it would gradually grow obsolete, while some would be deficient; and the same necessity for *occasional testimonies* would still remain. In the nature of things, moreover, it would, after a short time, at most a few years, be out of print and out of date, and ceasing to interest the public curiosity, would utterly fail of accomplishing its end. There is also solid reason to fear that in the present unhappy contentions which divide the church, it would be used by too many as the rallying point of party, and would inflame those wounds in the body of Christ which it should be our study and prayer to have speedily and thoroughly healed.

While these and similar reasons impel the Synod to decline issuing such a Testimony as hath been desired, there are others which persuade them that the plan on which, as the Lord in His providence hath called them, they have hitherto acted, and on which they are resolved to act in future—the plan of emitting *occasional testimonies*—includes all the excellencies of that which they reject; is free from its embarrassments, and is calculated to produce real and permanent good.

As witnesses of the Most High, Christians are especially bound to avow and defend those truths which are more immediately decried, and to oppose those errors which immediately prevail. This is termed by the Spirit of God *being established in the present truth*. It is the very essence of a judicious testimony; nor is there any way in which judicatories can so well maintain it as in serious and scriptural *occasional* acts.

Of this method of testifying there are plain and numerous traces in the Holy Scriptures and in the pious practice of the primitive church. Such testimonies have, moreover, special advantages; they are *brief*—so that a reader of ordinary diligence can, in a very little time, make himself perfectly master of their contents.

They are *pointed*; and by singling out the error which is doing *present* mischief, they give more effectual warning of *present* danger than could possibly be done if they were interspersed through a large and general publication.

They are *new*; and for this very reason they arrest the attention of men more than if they were diffused through an older and more extended work, however excellent.

They may also throw fresh light upon received truths, and make a deeper impression on the mind than if met with in the course of ordinary reading.

They furnish *special topics for religious conversation*; and by fixing the thoughts of pious people on a particular subject, render them greatly instrumental in edifying each other.

As they confine the attention of judicatories within a *small compass*, there is a better prospect of their being executed with ability and success.

They serve to *cement the affections* of judicatories and their people, as they oblige the former to watch, with peculiar zeal, over the interest of the latter, and afford the latter continual and enduring proofs of the faithfulness of the former.



They are frequent, and thus have a happy tendency to keep alive the spirit of honest testimony for Jesus Christ, which would slumber much deeper and much longer, were that duty supposed to be discharged in a solitary volume.

They will form, *collectively*, a more complete and useful vindication of truth than could be expected if the different branches of it were all to be discussed in a continued work.

They will show posterity what were the truths which, in a peculiar manner, their fathers were honored to maintain.

In 1798, the Synod resolved to change the text of the Westminster Confession in the "excepted" sections, and thus free it from even the semblance of Erastianism. These changes having been made, the Confession of Faith was adopted at Greencastle, Pa., on the 31st of May, 1799. From that time down to the present, that Confession of Faith, without any alteration or any testimonies, has continued to be the Confession of Faith of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South.

To say that it is absolutely free from all defects, would be to claim for it what can be claimed for nothing merely human. It contains, however, a clear, precise and manly statement of the doctrines of free grace, and so much resembles the Bible in its phraseology, that it may, with the strictest regard to truth, be said to be founded on and deduced from the Word of God. It was born, however, in a storm; but it has outlived the tempest. Until it was formulated, the Associate Reformed Synod was in a kind of unsettled state. Its adoption brought comparative peace; at least it brought greater stability to the Associate Reformed Church. If it did not increase its friends, it certainly drew clearly the line of distinction between the Associate Reformed Church and the other Scotch Presbyterian denominations. By both Covenanters and Associates, Burghers and Anti-Burghers, both in America and Scotland, the framers of the Confession of Faith of the Associate Reformed Church were severely censured. So great was the opposition to the Associate Reformed Church, that only a few of the Secession emigrants from Scotland or Ireland to America—and these few all Burghers—joined the Associate Reformed Church. These were prejudiced against her, and without examining into the matter, came to the wild conclusion that the Associate Reformed Church was full of heterodox doctrines and laxities in discipline.

Time, however, has reversed that hasty conclusion and vindicated the wisdom of the Associate Reformed fathers.



## CHAPTER XII.

**DISTURBANCES** Growing Out of the Unsettled State of the Church—The First Insubordinate Act—Londonderry Presbytery—David Annan Admits Samuel Taggart and Then Ordains William Morrison—The Synod Pronounced the Act Irregular, But the Ordination Valid—"The Presbytery of the Eastward" Coalesces With the Londonderry Presbytery—The Members of this New Organization Rarely Attend Synod—Soon Began to Show Signs of Laxity—Congregational in Their Notions—A Committee Appointed to Visit the Presbytery—Wrote a Letter—Nature of the Presbytery's Irregularities—Mr. Morrison's Reply to the Letter of the Committee—Its Fallacies—Declared Insubordinate by the Synod—Associate Reformed Presbyterianism Ceased to Exist in New England—Revived in 1846 by Dr. Blaikie—The Reformed Dissenting Presbytery—Its Origin and History—United With the Associate Church in 1851—Difficulty in the Presbytery of New York—Fast Days and Thanksgiving Days—Dr. John M. Mason's Course—The Difficulty Arranged, but Not Satisfactorily to All—**FREQUENT COMMUNION**—Custom of the Church of Scotland—Dr. John M. Mason's Letters—Dr. Mason's Ability—Social Position—Made a Mistake—Men Obey Custom Rather Than Law—Dr. Mason Excited Suspicion—John Smith Soured—Mason and Proudfoot—Dr. Mason An Innovator and Censurable.

Disturbances growing in part, perhaps, out of the unsettled state of things in the Associate Reformed Church from the period of her organization, in 1782, and the adoption of her constitution, in 1799, and partly arising from other causes, made the judicatories of the church often both unpleasant and unprofitable. We must not forget that purity is first; then follows peace as the shadow follows the substance.

The first event which occurred to give the Associated Reformed Church much trouble, was the insubordinate course pursued by the Presbytery of Londonderry. This Presbytery, organized, as we have seen, in 1786, formed originally a part of the Third Presbytery. The congregations in the New England States were taken from the Third Presbytery and erected into the Presbytery of Londonderry, which was, in 1791, changed to the Presbytery of New England. Some of the members of this Presbytery began, at a very early period, to manifest a disregard for law and order. Previous to the erection of the Londonderry Presbytery, the Third Presbytery appointed a meeting at Londonderry, on the 13th of February, 1783. This was but



a few months after the organization of the Associate Reformed Synod. The meeting was called for the purpose of ordaining William Morrison and installing him as pastor of the Second, or West Parish of Londonderry. The only members of the Presbytery present were the Rev. David Annan and an elder from his charge. In the Presbytery there were four ordained ministers, viz.: John Mason, Robert Annan, David Annan and Thomas Clarke. It was manifest that the ordination and installation of Mr. Morrison could not be proceeded with, for the want of a quorum. It so happened, however, that the Rev. Samuel Taggart, pastor of the Presbyterian congregation of Coleraine, Franklin county, Mass., was present, with the avowed design of joining the Associate Reformed Presbytery. Mr. Annan, aware, no doubt, that he and the elder from his charge did not constitute the Presbytery, was unwilling to proceed with the ordination and installation. To meet the emergency of the case, he first admitted Mr. Samuel Taggart as a member of the Presbytery, and then he and Mr. Taggart constituted the Presbytery and proceeded to ordain and install Mr. Morrison. At the next meeting of the Synod the facts were reported. The Synod, by an Act, sustained the validity of Mr. Morrison's ordination, but condemned the proceedings as irregular.

In 1793, "The Presbytery of the Eastward," an independent presbytery, composed of some Irish congregations in New England, which had not as yet united with any ecclesiastical body, and the Presbytery of New England, coalesced. This was without the authority, or even the knowledge of the Synod.

Conscious of having acted in this whole matter in an irregular and unconstitutional manner, the members of this new organization kept themselves aloof from the Synod. The name of their presbytery they changed and resumed the original name of Londonderry.

They soon began to exhibit more marked signs of departure from the faith and practice of the church, in the mode and matter of worship, and in discipline and form of government. They had imbibed the Congregational notions of their New England neighbors, and in the face of the law of the Associate Reformed Church, introduced into the sanctuary of God the practices of the Americanized Puritans. With the hope of re-



claiming this erratic Presbytery, the Synod appointed two of its members a committee to visit them. The Rev. John M. Mason was chairman of this committee.

The committee was providentially hindered from visiting in person the Presbytery; but Mr. Mason, in the name and by the authority of the committee, wrote to them an expostulatory letter condemning their irregularities and vindicating the action of the Synod. The irregularities of which the Presbytery of Londonderry was guilty were the introducing into the worship of God Watts' Psalms and Hymns; permitting non-professors to vote in church matters, and neglecting to attend the meetings of the Synod. To the letter of Mr. Mason, the Presbytery, through Mr. Morrison, replied as follows:

The distance of place, with other circumstances relative to me and my brethren in New England, render personal interview with our Southern brethren very inconvenient. Our presbytery have increased from the small number of three or four to ten settled ministers, viz: Messrs. Moore, Ewers, Annan, Taggart, Oliver, Dana, Tomb, Brewer, Pidgeon, and myself. This Presbytery consider themselves (with divine aid) competent to all the purposes of judicial authority in the churches or societies under their care; and best acquainted with their customs, tempers and manners; and their situation with respect to other denominations. They have considered the Act of Synod respecting psalmody as injurious to the cause of Presbytery in New England; and have voted to reply accordingly to the letter of Synod on the subject. Should the committee yet come and warmly insist upon the observance of the late Synodical Acts respecting psalmody and terms of communion, I will not say that they may gratify a few; but they will, I think, give a mortal wound to the influence of the Synod in this part of the continent. Common observation and experience concur with revelation in teaching us the necessity of governing people in a manner best adapted to their circumstances for their good and for the honor of religion.

The above, although not all of the communication of Mr. Morrison, in behalf of the Presbytery of Londonderry, is all that it contains in reply to the letter of Mr. Mason, and in vindication of the irregular course which the Presbytery was pursuing. It is frank and candid, but withal tinged with sophistry and manifests an insubordinate spirit.

Distance of place is stated as the cause of continued absence from the meetings of Synod. This was true only in part. The prime reason was the consciousness of having trampled under foot the rules and regulations of the church. The claim that people should be ecclesiastically governed according to their peculiar circumstances is based upon the assumption that there



is no form of church government laid down in the Scriptures. This, according to Presbyterians, which they professed to be, is false. The declaration that "they considered themselves competent to all the purposes of judicial authority in the churches or societies under their care" is not to be explained in accordance with any known principle of Presbyterianism.

In this insubordinate state the Presbytery of Londonderry continued to have a nominal connection with the Associate Reformed Synod until 1801, when the Synod declared itself no longer responsible for any of its acts. In 1809, the Presbytery of Londonderry, after an existence of mongrel independency for about eight years, was received into the Presbyterian Synod of Albany.

From 1801 to 1846 Associate Reformed Presbyterianism ceased to have an organic existence in New England. At the latter period an Associate Reformed congregation was organized in the city of Boston, Mass., by the Rev. Dr. Alexander Blaikie.

Another instance of at least apparent insubordination was the organization of *The Reformed Dissenting Presbytery*, by the Revs. Alexander McCoy and Robert Warwick. This case, however, was very different from that of the Presbytery of Londonderry. The latter had no regard for the principles and practices of the Reformers, but was bent on making every thing in religion conform to the manners and customs of the present hour. The former had, it may be safely said, more respect for the deliverances of the fathers than they had for principles brought to light by the providences of God in his dealings with the children of men.

When the Westminster Confession of Faith was modified "concerning the powers of the civil magistrate in matters of religion," and adopted as the "Constitution and Standards" of the Associate Reformed Church, Mr. McCoy protested. He, it seems, was opposed to any changes being made in the original Confession of Faith. Being unable to prevent the modification of the Sections reserved at the time of the union for "future consideration," he, on the 27th of June, 1799, declined the authority of the Associate Reformed Church. For the same reason, the Rev. Robert Warwick, on the 11th of November, 1800, did the same thing. On the 27th of January, 1801, these two



ministers and ruling elders John Pattison, Samuel Mitchell and Zaccheus Wilson, met at the house of John Scott, in Washington county, Pa., and constituted themselves into a presbytery to which they gave the name, REFORMED DISSENTING PRESBYTERY.

This presbytery continued to exist as a separate organization for a period of about fifty years, or from the 27th of January, 1801, to the summer of 1851, when it united with the Associate Synod.

During the fifty years of its existence thirteen ministers labored to propagate that particular phase of Secederism which was embodied in the Testimony of the Reformed Dissenting Presbytery, organized by Revs. McCoy and Warwick. Their success was not at any time very encouraging. They labored under great disadvantages. No doubt that Fathers McCoy and Warwick were honest in declaring that to change the Westminster Confession of Faith was an act of "unfaithfulness to reformation principles;" but the followers of these worthy men found it no easy matter to propagate their opinions concerning the powers of the civil magistrate. The Secession Church effected a grand revolution in Christendom concerning the powers of the civil magistrate in matters pertaining to the church. The fathers of the Reformed Dissenting Presbytery entertained the same opinion respecting the powers of the civil magistrate *circa sacra* which were entertained by the Church of Scotland previous to the Secession. The doctrine that the church is "the free and independent kingdom of the Redeemer," and that the civil magistrate has no authority to interfere in its government is traceable to the Bible, but it was first practically evolved by Dissenters from the Church of Scotland.

It is highly probable that the brethren, McCoy and Warwick, were treated harshly. Little allowance was made for the bias of early education, and they were expected to see at a glance what they and their fathers had never been taught had an existence, viz.: a state separate from the church, or a church independent of the state.

Near the same time that the trouble began with the Presbytery of Londonderry, a difficulty of a somewhat different character sprang up in the Presbytery of New York.



In the Church of Scotland, and in all the Dissenting branches of that church, it had, for a period far beyond the memory of any one living, been customary to observe a day of fasting previous to the administration of the Lord's Supper, and a day of thanks-giving afterward. The session of the congregation in the city of New York resolved to discontinue this custom. This gave offense to some of the congregation. It was no easy matter for these conscientious people to give up a time-honored custom. They could not see how it was possible for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to be properly dispensed without previously observing a fast-day. The Rev. John M. Mason was pastor of the congregation by whose session these supposed innovations were introduced. The matter being brought before the Presbytery of New York, occasioned considerable discussion. Finally it was, after various motions had been offered, "agreed to recommend mutual forbearance and affection, and leave the different sessions to act in this matter as they conceive the will of the Lord to be revealed in his word, and explained by the Act and Directory of Synod." This was not satisfactory to the party complaining. Very few persons have a clear and distinct idea of what is meant by the word *forbear*. With many, if not with the majority, it means: "You must think as I think and do as I do, or you will do wrong, and I will have nothing to do with you." There certainly is no warrant in the Scriptures for observing either fast-days or thanks-giving-days in connection with the Lord's Supper; neither is there any Scripture forbidding the observance of such days. Such being the case, the observance of such days should be left to the wisdom and discretion of Sessions. Mr. James Mairs took, conscientiously, no doubt, a different view of this matter, and having protested against the action of the presbytery, appealed to the Synod. When the matter came before the Synod, Messrs. Mairs and Mason, the offender and the offended, were appointed a committee to prepare a report on the subject. A report was presented and unanimously adopted; but it is doubtful whether it gave satisfaction to the people generally. We may safely say that while the report is founded on the plainest Scriptural principles, it was violently opposed by a very respectable minority, both of the ministers and lay members in connection with the denomination.



Shortly after this, the Rev. John M. Mason began the practice of FREQUENT COMMUNION. The custom of the Church of Scotland, after which both the Reformed Presbyterian and Associate Churches were modified, was to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper not oftener than twice during the year and frequently only once. In the Church of Scotland there was no law on the subject. Custom had established a law apparently in opposition to the "Directory for Public Worship," adopted in 1645. In that *Directory* it is stated, under the proper head, that "the Communion or Supper of the Lord is frequently to be celebrated;" but how often is left to be determined by the pastor or other church officers in each congregation. The frequent administration of the Lord's Supper and the dispensing with the observance of fast and thanksgiving-days in connection with its administration, found in John M. Mason a zealous and able advocate. In order to propagate his opinion on this subject, he published, during the year 1798, a series of able letters, which were addressed to the members of the Associate Reformed Church. These letters gave offense to many, especially to the older members of the Associate Reformed Church, and caused them to regard their author with a degree of suspicion. He was charged as an innovator. If, however, he had waited quietly for a few years, the probability is that he would have outlived all this suspicion. The observance of fast-days in connection with the administration of the Lord's Supper is, at present, left optional with the members of the Associate Reformed Church, and each congregation is permitted to celebrate the Lord's Supper as often each year as the office-bearers in the congregation may deem proper or necessary for edification. There is really no law on either of these subjects. Unfortunately for Mr. Mason, he was in advance of his age in this matter, and consequently, as must ever be the case with such men, he encountered strong opposition. Intellectually, America has produced but few men who have equaled John M. Mason. As a pulpit orator he was first among the first. Nature did a great deal for him, and he enjoyed rare advantages for the cultivation of the gifts with which a kind Providence had endowed him. His own denomination was proud of him, and all others regarded him as a prince. In the city of New York he was brought in constant



contact with those who occupied the highest position in society. The learned and honored were his companions. Judges, professors in colleges, and ambassadors from European governments sat entranced while he conversed. He was conscious of his powers, and no doubt, in the honesty of his heart, desired to refine and Americanize the church of his fathers.

He made a mistake. There is something which we may call metaphysically slow in the Scotch mind. John M. Mason could have led the whole of the French nation; but he could not lead the whole of the Associate Reformed Church, small as it was in his day. He moved too fast. He did not give the masses of the denomination time to think.

There is a disposition in most men to violate legal enactments; but all men cling to that law which custom has established. It is hard for any man to understand how it is possible for a custom which has prevailed for centuries not to be binding upon the consciences of all. John M. Mason was an innovator. Not that he introduced practices contrary to the word of God, but practices contrary to the time-honored usages of the church to which he belonged. The custom of observing a day of fasting before administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and a day of thanks-giving afterward, had, for good and solid reasons, been introduced into the Church of Scotland and adopted by all the Secession branches of that church. The custom prevailed in some congregations until very recently, and it is not easy to see any evil consequences which would result from such observances at the present time. In fact, every truly Godly man or woman will commend such a custom as eminently calculated to increase the growth of grace in Christians. Still, there is no law in the word of God for such observances, and consequently it is wrong to say that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper cannot be properly received without observing a fast-day before its administration, and a day of thanksgiving afterward. It is probable that the controversies about fast-days and frequent communion, together with some other things which scarcely ever saw the light, weakened the confidence of at least a respectable minority of the Associate Reformed ministers and people in the Rev. John M. Mason. The Rev. John Smith left the Associate Reformed Church mainly because Mr. Ma-



son, then only a boy, was called to be pastor of the church made vacant by the death of his father. This position Mr. Smith was very anxious to secure, but failing—a boy being preferred before him—he became soured, and his friends became cold toward Mr. Mason.

When the theological seminary was established, “some of the leading and most judicious members of the church in New York were anxious that the Rev. Dr. Alexander Proudfoot be associated with the Rev. Dr. John M. Mason. This certainly would have been wise; but on account of a scheme of Dr. Mason’s, which was never realized, it was not done.” The result was a partial suspension of the friendship which once existed between the two. Mr. Proudfoot never manifested that interest in the seminary which was expected. It is true, that in the course of time the past was forgotten and wrongs forgiven. The Rev. John M. Mason’s talents placed him prominently before the public; but it may well be doubted whether he ever had the entire confidence of the Associate Reformed Church after the controversy about fast-days and frequent communion.

In one sense he was not to be censured, and in another he certainly was. He was not to be censured because he did not regard the observance of these days binding. Neither was he to be censured because he thought the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper ought to be administered oftener than was the custom in his day, because the Scriptures do not specify how often it is to be administered. He was, however, to be censured because he seems to have had no regard for the opinions and practices of the pious fathers. That man is to be sharply censured who ruthlessly tears down what the pious of past generations have built up. He must make for himself, if not open enemies, secret despisers; weaken his influence for good, and do the cause of truth injury to the extent of his ability. He who has no regard for the past has very little respect for the present.



## CHAPTER XIII.

ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCH Began to Grow and Decline at the Same Time—Ministers Lose Confidence in Each Other—Causes which Led to the Final Dissolution of the *General Synod*—The Psalmody Question—Its History in Connection with the Presbyterian Church in the United States—Watts' Imitations First Allowed; then Watts' Hymns—Finally, both Watts and Rouse Practically Laid Aside—History of Rouse's Version of the Psalms—The Scotch Version—The Metre of Rouse's Version—Rouse's Version Amended and Adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland—History of Uninspired Hymns—Paraphrases Allowed by the Church of Scotland—Their Character—Practice of the Covenanters—Practice of the Presbyterian Church Prior to 1753—The Result of Introducing Watts' Version—The History of Watts' Version—His Design as Stated by Himself—His Preface to his Imitations—Remarkable Production—His Hymns—Offensive to Many—Those who had been Persecuted by Kings of England could not Sing them—Rouse's Version—What is Claimed for it—Its Poetic Excellence—The Doctrine of the Associate Reformed Church concerning Psalmody—Not a Version, but the Psalms—Psalmody Practically Divides the Associate Reformed Church and all Hymn-singing Churches—A Tendency in the Associate Reformed Church to Follow the Multitude—Marshall's Sermon on Psalmody—The Associate Reformed Church took higher ground on Psalmody than that occupied by the Church of Scotland—Section in Confession of Faith on "Singing of Psalms"—The Section Quoted—Trouble about the Change Proposed in Paragraph 2 of Section III.

Of the Associate Reformed Church it may be said, however contradictory it may appear, that it began to grow and decline at the same time. In less than twenty years after its organization, its ministers began to lose confidence in each other. This became distinctly visible after the year 1810. This undesirable state of things was brought about by a series of events, some trivial in themselves and others of great importance. These will now be stated as nearly in the order of time as the existing circumstances will permit.

The Psalmody question began to disturb the church in America at a very early period. The Presbyterian Church began to be harassed by it prior to the arrival of Gellatly and Arnot. In 1753 this question was propounded to the Synod of New York, viz: "Whether a church session hath power to introduce a new version of psalms into the congregation to



which they belong, without the consent of the majority of said congregation." To this the Synod voted a unanimous negative. Previous to this, some of the congregations under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Synod of New York had introduced into the worship of God Watts' version of the psalms. This was not done by the consent of all the members of these congregations, nor even of the majority. It seems that it was taken for granted that in this matter the majority had the right to rule.

The question was before the higher judicatories of the Presbyterian Church for a number of years. At first the contest was between the Scotch version of the psalms and that by Dr. Isaac Watts. Afterward the propriety or admissibility of using Watts' hymns was introduced, and finally, both the Scotch version and Watts' version were practically laid aside and uninspired hymns, collected from all quarters, substituted in their place. Such is, practically, the state of the question in the Presbyterian Church at present.

As the psalmody question had very much to do in disturbing the peace and harmony of the Associate Reformed Church, it is proper to trace the history of that trouble.

In the Church of Scotland, from which sprang both the Associate and Reformed Presbyterian churches, the version of psalms used in the worship of God, both publicly and privately, was what is generally but incorrectly called "Rouse's version." This was preceded in England and Scotland by the version of Sternhold and Hopkins. Previous to this the psalmody of the church was, like everything else, so grossly corrupted, that it was absolutely destitute of both devotion and sense. Hymns were generally made for the present occasion, and were almost always foolish, and sometimes grossly sensual and wicked.

The history of what is properly known as Rouse's version of the psalms is simple and easy. Immediately previous to the convening of the Westminster divines, the version of the psalms in general use by all religious denominations in England and Scotland was the version of Sternhold and Hopkins. Complaints being made of this to the Parliament, they brought the matter to the attention of the Assembly, desiring them to recommend some other version to be used in the churches. After having read over the version made and published by



Francis Rouse, and amending it in several particulars, the Assembly sent the following to the House of Commons, on the 14th of November, 1645 :

WHEREAS, The honorable House of Commons, by an order bearing date November 20, 1643, have recommended the psalms published by Mr. Rouse to the consideration of the Assembly of Divines, the Assembly has caused them to be carefully perused, and as they are now altered and amended do approve them, and humbly conceive they may be useful and profitable to the church, if they be permitted to be sung.

On the reception of the above recommendation the Parliament authorized Rouse's version of the psalms.

On the 28th of August, 1647, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed an Act for revising the version of Rouse. The work of revision was distributed as follows, viz.: The first forty were assigned to John Adamson; the second forty to Thomas Crawford; the third forty to John Row; and the remaining thirty to John Nevey.

These individuals were instructed not to confine themselves in this matter to the version of Rouse, but to use any other that they might find better. In the version of Rouse, there were some of the psalms which were not adapted to common metre tunes. In such cases, it was recommended that a common metre version be furnished. Zachary Boyd was recommended to translate other Scripture songs into metre. At the next meeting of the General Assembly these individuals reported, and Rouse's version, as amended by them, was sent to the Presbyteries to be further examined. The Presbyteries reported to the General Assembly in August, 1649. The Assembly appointed James Hamilton, John Smith, Hugh Mackail, Robert Traill, George Hutcheson and Robert Lowrie, a committee to report on the matter; but the Assembly not being able "to overtake the work," instructed this committee to report to the commission of the General Assembly at their meeting in Edinburgh, in November. The commission was granted full power to conclude the work and "publish and emit the same for public use." This they did, as the act of the commission of the Assembly clearly shows. The following is the act:

"The commission of the General Assembly having with great diligence considered the paraphrase of the psalms in metre sent from the Assembly of Divines in England, by our commissioners whilst they were there, as it is corrected



by former General Assemblies, committees from them, and now at last by the brethren deputed from the late Assembly for that purpose; and having examined the same, do approve the said paraphrase, as it is now compiled; and, therefore, according to the powers given them by the said Assembly, do appoint it to be printed and published for public use; hereby authorizing the same to be the only paraphrase of the psalms of David to be sung in the Kirk of Scotland; and discharging the old paraphrase, and any other than this new paraphrase, to be made use of in any congregation or family after the first of May, 1650."

It is a matter of fact that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland constantly speak of the amended version of Rouse as the "new paraphrase of the psalms." The version in use before it they refer to also as a "paraphrase," and sometimes as "our own paraphrase."

The amended version of Rouse soon came into general use in the Church of Scotland, and continued to be used to the exclusion of all other versions for more than one hundred years.

This was the case in all the branches of the Church of Scotland. The Covenanters sung it, and the Seceders sung it. It was sung around the fireside of the humble peasant and in the halls of the nobles. Soldiers sung it as they marched into battle, and the tender mother sung it in her humble home as she soothed her restless babe to sleep. It produced a deep and lasting impression upon the whole Scotch people and made them, like itself, ruggedly grand. In fact, so great was the effect of this version of the psalms of David upon the Scotch, that the very idiom of the Scotch peasants was that of the Jews in the days of Samuel.

The question of singing uninspired hymns in praise to God had no existence in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation down to a very recent period. The practice was begun in the days of papal darkness, was abolished at the Reformation, and again revived, so far as Presbyterians are concerned, in America. It is now well nigh universal.

It is true, that in the Church of Scotland, and perhaps in all the branches of that church, paraphrases of other portions of Scripture were, at a very early period, authoritatively made. These paraphrases were seldom used, and that only by a few congregations. They were called hymns, but they were not hymns in the present popular meaning of that word. They were metrical renderings of passages selected from both the Old



and the New Testament. In the Secession Church of Scotland these paraphrases were authorized as early as 1745; but there is no evidence that they were used, at least to any considerable extent, for a period of seventy-five years. The Reformed Presbyterian or Covenanter Church has always, even down to the present day, adhered absolutely and exclusively to what is popularly known as Rouse's version.

In the Presbyterian Church in America Rouse's version of the psalms was used exclusively, or nearly so, in both the public and the private worship of God, from the time of its first organization down to about 1753, a period of about fifty years. From this time the subject was before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church for more than half a century. At first, the question was the exchange of Rouse's version for that of Dr. Watts'. This continued to be a vexed question for more than forty years. The change was at first, and for a long time, very disagreeable to at least a respectable minority of that church. The "imitation of Watts," as it is uniformly called, being introduced, the next question was on the introduction of Watts' hymns. In 1802 the General Assembly made the following deliverance:

WHEREAS, The version of the Psalms, made by Dr. Watts, has heretofore been allowed in the congregations under the care of the General Assembly, it is thought expedient that the hymns of Dr. Watts be also allowed.

This date marks at least the official introduction of the hymns of Dr. Watts into the Presbyterian Church of America. Previous to this, they were used by single individuals and single congregations, but not with the official sanction of the courts of the denomination.

The church was by no means a unit in its approbation of this step. Many individuals were dissatisfied. A few withdrew from the denomination, and others, although they remained in it, never approved of the measure.

A few Presbyterian congregations, the membership of which are of pure Scotch-Irish descent, continued, until very recently, to use exclusively Rouse's version of the psalms. In the great majority, however, of the congregations of the Presbyterian Church of the present day no one of the members ever heard sung one of the psalms in Rouse's version.



With respect to the version or "imitation," as it is rightly called, of Watts, it may be said that it is so named from its author. Dr. Isaac Watts was a Dissenting minister of England, born in 1674, and died in 1748. He was learned and pious, and although not worthy to be ranked among the first-class of poets, his works show that he was endowed with very considerable poetic talents. It has been asserted most positively, but how truthfully we will not undertake to say, that he was, during the latter part of his life, in sympathy with what was then known as the Arian party, or that he denied the divinity of our Saviour. The works by which he is best known are his version of the Psalms and his religious hymns. These were published about the latter part of the year 1718. The design which he had in view is best expressed in his own words: "I come, therefore," he says in the preface, "to the third thing I propose; and it is this, to explain my own design, which, in short, is this, namely: to accommodate the Book of Psalms to Christian worship. And in order to this, it is necessary to divest David and Asaph, &c., of every other character but that of a psalmist and a saint, and to make them always speak the common sense of a Christian."

Such, in his own language, was the design of Dr. Watts. Whether he succeeded in making "David and Asaph speak the common sense of a Christian," or not, it is not our province to say. We may say that he made a bold effort, in order to succeed, by changing the sense of the Psalms of the Bible. He was by no means afraid to tamper with the inspired songs. Some he excluded entirely; from others he lopped off what he no doubt regarded surplusages, and to others added what he conceived the Holy Spirit had either forgotten, neglected, or did not know. "Attempting the work with this view," he says, "I have entirely omitted some whole psalms and large pieces of many others; and have chosen out of all of them such parts only as might easily and naturally be accommodated to the various occasions of the Christian life."

He was not careful to give the exact meaning of David; or, to quote his own language: "I have not been so curious or exact in striving, everywhere, to express the ancient sense and



meaning of David; but have rather expressed myself as I may suppose David would have done, had he lived in the days of Christianity."

Such is, briefly and in his own language, the design of Dr. Watts in preparing a version of the psalms, and the rule which he adopted in order to effect his design.

He composed his hymns because "there are," he says, "a great many circumstances that attend common Christians, which cannot be agreeably expressed by any paraphrase on the words of David."

It is the business of the theologian, rather than of the historian, to discuss the question of psalmody on its merits; but we may be permitted to say that Dr. Watts' preface to his psalms and hymns is a most wonderful production to be penned by a man who, we suppose, believed that David and Asaph spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The unguarded expressions in Dr. Watts' preface to his psalms and hymns, and the ruthless manner in which he added to and took away from God's Word, excited the fears of not a few pious men and women. They could have no confidence in the man who would dare to say that he had made David and Asaph "speak the common sense of a Christian." To speak the language of David and Asaph, they thought, was to speak the language of heaven. There were, besides, many things in the language of some of Dr. Watts' hymns which were very offensive to at least some, and consequently they could not and would not sing them in praise of God.

In his hymn entitled "A Song in Praise to God from Great Britain," he says, in speaking of the blessings which God was bestowing upon Great Britain:

"He builds and guards the British throne,  
And makes it gracious like his own;  
Makes our successive princes kind.  
And gives our dangers to the wind."

Again, he says in another hymn:

"The crowns of British princes shine  
With rays above the rest,  
Where laws and liberty combine  
To make the nation blest."



These stanzas, however smooth, were not calculated to awaken the devotional feelings of those whose ancestors had experienced the cruelties of the Stuarts.

These and many other things of a similar character impelled Scotch Presbyterians generally to oppose the introduction of Watts' psalms and hymns into the worship of God. In addition to this, if it were so that Dr. Watts, in his latter days, as has been often affirmed and was certainly believed, turned Arian, this of itself would have rendered anything he would have said or done objectionable to the members of the Associate and Covenanter Churches.

It will not be denied that at first the question discussed was the relative value of the two versions of the Book of Psalms. It was not long, however, until the controversy assumed a different aspect.

Strictly speaking, Watts' version is nothing but an imitation, and confessedly a very imperfect imitation. No one has ever claimed that it was a literal rendering of the psalms into metre. Its author did not make this claim for it. Neither has any one claimed for Rouse's version that it is absolutely literal. It was however, claimed for it, on good and solid grounds, that it was "translated and diligently compared with *the original text and former translations*," and made "more smooth and agreeable to the *text* than any heretofore."

It claimed to be agreeable to the text of the Hebrew Psalter, and to be smoother than any version of the psalms which had preceded it. That it is absolutely literal, and absolutely finished English verse, is a claim which has never been set up for it.

The version of Dr. Watts is smoother, but certainly not so poetic, unless the whole of poetry consists in something which both Shakspeare and Milton did not possess.

The relative merits of the two versions, however, is a matter of very little importance; for these were soon lost sight of, and one of far graver importance took its place. That question is correctly stated thus: "Have we any authority in the Scriptures for singing in the formal public and private worship of God any psalms or hymns or spiritual songs, except those which God has given to the church, all of which are contained in the Bible?"



On this question the members of the Presbyterian Church were for a long time divided. The division was by no means equal—the great majority ever being on the side which regarded it as a matter of indifference what was sung, provided it was not Rouse's version. The reason of this was because the pure Scotch element was never, at any time, very distinct and prominent in the Presbyterian Church of America.

The members of the Associate Church generally, and the Covenanters as a whole, were opposed to worshipping God with anything which he himself had not directly furnished.

Both Associates and Covenanters were opposed to singing in formal worship anything but a literal version of the psalms, so far as this was possible, and on no account would they authorize a hymn composed by man—no matter how beautiful—to be used in the formal worship of God. They regarded it as a sin.

This at once made the dividing line between the Associates and Covenanters, on the one hand, and the hymn-singing Presbyterians on the other, in America, clear and distinct. The Covenanters and Associates held that it was a sin to sing in worship to God compositions merely human, while the great body of the Presbyterian Church in America held that it was not.

By no act of either the Associate Church, or the Reformed Presbyterian Church, or the Associate Reformed Church, was either Watts' psalms or Watts' hymns, or the hymns of any one else allowed to be used in the worship of God.

From a variety of causes, however, at a very early period in the history of both the Associate and the Covenanter Churches in America, a tendency to depart from the old paths began to manifest itself. This, in all probability, arose, in part, at least, from that inclination which is in most persons, to do as others do. Previous to 1753, a few Presbyterian congregations had introduced Watts' psalms, and the General Assembly first tolerated it and afterwards sanctioned it.

In 1773, the Rev. William Marshall, by the appointment of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, preached a sermon "designed to show that the Psalms of David only are to be used in worship." This sermon was afterward published and is still preserved as a relic of the past.



The fact that the presbytery thought fit to "appoint one of its members to preach a sermon to show that the Psalms of David *only* are to be used in worship," seems to indicate with considerable certainty that some persons under the inspection of the presbytery, either had lax practices, or latitudinarian notions respecting psalmody.

During the time that the Confession of Faith of the Associate Reformed Church was under consideration, it was discovered that entire unanimity of sentiment did not exist among the members of the Associate Reformed Church on the question of psalmody. Some were in favor of adopting the same position on the question of psalmody as that occupied by the Church of Scotland and the Secession Church of Scotland. Others were in favor of adopting a higher, and, as was thought, a more Scriptural position.

It is a fact well attested, that the Associate Reformed Church has always occupied higher ground on the psalmody question than either the National Church of Scotland or the Secession Church of Scotland. While both these adopted the psalms of David as proper to be used in singing praise to God, they did not forbid the use of paraphrases or hymns. This was the ground taken by some of those who originally constituted the Associate Reformed Church. How many there were who entertained this opinion it is impossible now to learn. There were others who entertained views on the psalmody question higher than their fathers. Hence, there is a difference between the Section "*on singing of psalms*" in the Scotch Confession of Faith and that in the Associate Reformed Confession of Faith. That the reader may compare the two, and as the Scotch Confession is not generally accessible, the Section which treats of singing psalms will be quoted entire. It is as follows:

"It is the duty of Christians to praise God publicly, by singing of psalms together in the congregation, and also privately in the family. In singing of psalms, the voice is to be tunably and gravely ordered; but the chief care must be to sing with the understanding and with grace in the heart, making melody unto the Lord. That the whole congregation may join herein, every one that can read is to have a psalm-book; all others not disabled by age or otherwise are to be exhorted to learn to read. But for the present, where many in the congregation cannot read, it is convenient that the minister, or some other fit person appointed by him and the other ruling officers, do read the psalm, line by line, before the singing thereof."



When the above was adopted, the question of hymn singing did not exist in the Church of Scotland. In addition, it may be said that in this, as well as in several other things essential to the purity of the church, the Church of Scotland was only in a formative state.

This section "on singing of psalms" the fathers of the Associate Reformed Church remodeled, as the reader will readily discover. The Section in the Associate Reformed Confession of Faith takes higher ground than the same section in the Scotch Confession; but it is to be doubted whether it is as high as the uniform practice in strict Associate Reformed congregations has ever been.

Paragraph 2 of Section III of the *Directory for Public Worship*, of the Associate Reformed Church, is both weak and strong. It is ambiguous. The first part of that Section is a mild commendation of the propriety of singing the psalms of David in the public and private worship of God, but it does not condemn the use of paraphrases of Scripture, or hymns merely human. The last sentence or clause of that Section gives force to the whole. It was, however, with considerable difficulty and only after long discussion, that this clause was added. Paragraph 2 of Section III, of the *Directory for Worship*, when first penned, read as follows:

It is the will of God that the sacred songs contained in the Book of Psalms be sung in His worship, both public and private, to the end of the world; and the rich variety and perfect purity of their matter, the blessing of God upon them in every age, and the edification of the church thence arising, sets the propriety of singing them in a convincing light.

Here the paragraph ended, and here by some it was designed and desired to end.

By some it was, and correctly, too, regarded as ambiguous. It praised the psalms of David, but did not condemn as unfit for the worship of God the hymns of Dr. Watts or of Alexander Pope, or of William Cowper, or of anybody else.

To free the paragraph of ambiguity the clause, "Nor shall any composure merely human be sung in any of the Associate Reformed Churches," was added by the Rev. John Hemphill, of Hopewell, Chester county, S. C.



Any one reading over carefully the whole paragraph will discover that it is not the production of one man. The sentence was so framed as to end with "convincing light," and the last clause is by another hand.

The paragraph, when amended and adopted, was not as strong as some of the members desired; but when asked why they did not make it stronger, they replied: "It is the best we could get."



## CHAPTER XIV.

THE COMMUNION QUESTION—The Londonderry Presbytery—Dr. Mason's Difficulty Complicated—Dr. Mason's Reasons for Resigning his Charge—His Labors—Purpose Thwarted by the Trustees of the Congregation—With a Colony began to Establish a Third Congregation in New York—Had Difficulty to get a Place of Worship—Was Granted Conditionally Dr. Romeyn's Church—The Offer Accepted—Dr. Mason's Preaching—The Effect upon the Two Congregations—They Commune Together—The Case Came Before the General Synod—Dr. Mason's Statements Respecting His Course—The Doctrine of the Associate Reformed Church Respecting the Communion of Saints—The XXVIth Chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith—The Little Constitution—Doctrine of the early Seceders and Covenanters respecting the Communion of Saints—Wilson Quoted—Shields Quoted—Gellatly Quoted—The Narrative Quoted—The State of Things when the Associate Reformed Synod was Organized—No Brotherly Love—This Had Been the Case since 1679—The Burghers and Anti-Burghers—Practically, There was No Such thing as Occasional Communion Prior to 1810—Its Lawfulness Admitted by the Associate Reformed Church—The Occasional Communion of the Associate Reformed Fathers not the Modern, Catholic Communion—Dr. Mason's Peculiar Circumstances—His Act was Contrary to Custom, but not to Law—The Case of Messrs. Matthews and Clark—All Tried Together—This Unfortunate—Resolution Passed—General Dissatisfaction—Dr. Mason Preaches for Dr. Romeyn—Uses Watts' Psalms—Clear Violation of Law—Mr. Clark Censurable—The Vote in the Case—No One Satisfied—The Parties Disposed to be Extremists.

The psalmody question and the *communion* question may be said to have been coëval, and became, not necessarily, but actually connected. The Presbytery of Londonderry, as has been elsewhere stated, soon after its organization, began to show visible signs of insubordination to the ecclesiastical courts, both in the matter of psalmody and communion. It was not, however, until about the year 1810 that the controversies on these questions began to disturb the church generally and threaten its extermination.

Prior to that time, although some diversity of opinion existed among the members of the Associate Reformed Church concerning psalmody and communion, these questions had not come, at least prominently before any of the courts of the



church for adjudication. From that time on, until 1822, the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church began to show constant and increasing signs of premature decay.

On the 25th of May, 1810, Dr. John M. Mason resigned the pastoral charge of the Cedar Street Church, in New York. He had been contemplating this for about three years. In 1807 he asked for an assistant, but owing to the financial crisis—through which the country was soon called to pass this request was not pressed. The reasons which induced Dr. Mason to ask for an assistant afterward prompted him, in part, to demit the pastoral care of the congregation in which his father had labored faithfully and diligently for thirty years.

Besides being pastor of a large congregation, Dr. Mason was professor in the theological seminary, and in some way connected with all the benevolent operations and schemes of his own denomination and of several other denominations. His time was wholly occupied. He had no time to attend to his parochial duties. All that he could attempt as a pastor was to preach.

In 1809, he proposed to the trustees of the church that some steps be taken to enlarge the house of worship. The avowed design he had in view by this movement was to increase the numerical strength of the congregation, and thereby increase it pecuniarily. This would enable the congregation to employ an assistant pastor.

The trustees were unwilling to undertake the erection of a new house of worship at that time, and replied to his request that they had concluded to postpone the matter for the present. Dr. Mason promptly determined, on the reception of the reply of the trustees of the congregation, to demit his charge.

It is highly probable that Dr. Mason felt aggrieved by the want of compliance on the part of the trustees. His plans were frustrated, and the long-cherished hope of obtaining an assistant blighted. Between him and the congregation there was no quarrel—no open rupture. By some he was the idol, but by others—and they of the older and stricter sort—he was simply “the prince of *preachers*.”

The congregation having been called together, were informed by Dr. Mason that it was his fixed purpose to resign his pas-



toral charge. This he accordingly did, and after some hesitancy, his resignation was, by the Presbytery of New York, accepted.

It was not the design of Dr. Mason, in demitting his pastoral charge, to abandon the pulpit. "To preach Jesus Christ and him crucified," he declared at the time, "is my honor and happiness." With a small colony he began immediately the building up of a third Associate Reformed Church in the city of New York. The erection of a house of worship was begun in Murray street. This, however, was not completed until the summer of 1812.

Dr. Mason and his colony experienced considerable difficulty at first in obtaining a house of worship. In the midst of their strait, the trustees of the Presbyterian church in Cedar street generously tendered them the use of their house, at such times as it was not occupied by themselves.

The Rev. Dr. John B. Romeyn was, at the time, pastor of the congregation. The hours of worship were so arranged that Dr. Mason immediately succeeded Dr. Romeyn. A large number of Dr. Romeyn's congregation remained and formed a part of Dr. Mason's constant hearers.

At no time in all his life were the pulpit powers of Dr. Mason so manifestly felt. He exerted himself. His whole soul was in the work. His hearers were interested, delighted and moved.

By force of circumstances, the two congregations became acquainted with each other, and having become acquainted, they formed for each other a mutual attachment. Practically, they were, only for the time being, one congregation. When the time came for administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Dr. Mason and his session resolved to invite Dr. Romeyn's congregation to unite with them in this holy ordinance. This invitation was accepted, and a similar invitation was extended when Dr. Romeyn dispensed the sacrament to his people. This also was accepted.

In describing this act, which resulted, we may safely say, in so much harm to the Associate Reformed Church, Dr. Mason says:



"The invitations were as cordially accepted as they were frankly given. The bulk of the members of both churches, as well as some belonging to correlate churches, mingled their affections and their testimony in the holy ordinance. The ministers reciprocated the services of the sacramental day; and the communion thus established has been perpetuated with increasing delight and attachment, and has extended itself to ministers and private Christians of other churches."

Dr. Mason further adds that "such an event, it is believed, had never before occurred in the United States." It is taken for granted that Dr. Mason thought deliberately when he penned this last sentence. Whatever may have been the practice of the Presbyterian Church, it is true beyond all controversy that so far as the Associate Reformed Church was concerned, no such event had ever occurred. It was a clear and marked departure from the practice of the Associate Reformed Church, but not from her laws. Every one possessing even a tolerable knowledge of the history of the Associate Reformed Church will admit that in practice she did not differ from the Associate or Reformed Presbyterian Churches on the subject of communion.

The Associate Reformed Church adopted the XXVIth Chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith. In that Chapter it is taught that "all saints that are united to Jesus Christ, their head, by his spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection and glory." Again: "Saints by profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification."

The fathers of the Associate Reformed Church most certainly thought that they were warranted by the XXVIth Chapter of the Confession of Faith in extending communion to all who, in every place, call on the name of the Lord Jesus in conformity to his will. Of this there can be no doubt, for they positively say so in so many words.

At the first meeting of the Associate Reformed Synod, in 1783, the following was adopted and became a part and parcel of what is known as the *Little Constitution*:

It is the resolution of this Synod to treat pious people of other denominations with great attention and tenderness. They are willing, as God affords opportunity, to extend communion to all who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus; but as occasional communion, in a divided state of the



Church, may be attended with great disorders, they hold themselves bound to submit to every restriction of their liberty which general edification renders necessary.

In a foot-note they say :

The principle expressed in this Article is not a new one. It is an original principle of the Secession, and is set in a convincing light in the XXVIth Chapter of the Confession of Faith.

The following quotation from the Rev. William Wilson's "Defense of Reformed Principles" shows most clearly that the Seceders and Reformed Presbyterians held the same opinion on the subject of communion. The following is the language of Mr. Wilson, one of the four who organized the Associate Presbytery :

There is a union and communion catholic and universal among all Christians, considered as such. and an ecclesiastical union and communion amongst members of one particular organical church, considered as members of that church. This, observe, I take from Mr. Shields on Church Communion, page 25. The same worthy author (Mr. Shields), likewise observes that organic communion must be on stricter terms than catholic communion with others that are not members of the same organic church.

The above is also quoted by Mr. Gellatly, in his answer to the "Detection Detected," as expressing his views and the views of the Associate Presbytery of Scotland, and also of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania.

In the "Overture" published by order of Synod, in 1787, the following language occurs :

That a temporary, or what is called occasional, communion with sister churches, may lawfully in some instances take place, is what no man of understanding, who is not too much pinched to support some favorite and false hypothesis, will deny. The terms of it are not materially different from the terms of stated communion, only making allowance for a variety of innocent customs and forms.

Those of the Associate Church who did not go into the union which formed the Associate Reformed Church, certainly thought that the Associate Reformed Synod regarded temporary or occasional communion lawful, in some instances, as the quotation from their "Narrative" will show :

This new Synod (the Associate Reformed), so far as we can understand the Sixth and Seventh Articles of their Constitution (Little Constitution), have one set of terms on which they admit people to what they call fixed communion; another set of terms on which they will admit people to what they call occasional communion.



At the time the Associate Reformed Synod was organized, all the branches of the Presbyterian Church were in a very disturbed state. This disturbance was one of long standing. After the battle of Bothwell Bridge, in 1679, the strict Covenanters had very little social intercourse, and no Christian communion with the Church of Scotland. Time seems to have had very little effect in narrowing the chasm which separated these staunch adherents to the Covenants from all other parties. Among them occasional communion had no practical existence, although Alexander Shields says that "organic communion must be on stricter terms than catholic communion with others that are not members of the same organic church."

After the organization of the Associate Presbytery, in 1733, practically all communion was broken between the Church of Scotland and the Secession party; and after the rupture, in 1747, in the Secession Church, there was even less social intercourse and Christian fellowship between the Burghers and Anti-Burghers than between them and those from whom both parties had seceded.

The Burghers and Anti-Burghers carried their opposition to each other to an extent which fills the mind with astonishment. The check is mantled with shame on the mere recitation of the unchristian acts and words done and said by those Christian people. "The nearest relatives and once most affectionate friends beheld," says one who relates what he had witnessed, "one another with a vindictive eye, and were mutually treated with a rudeness scarcely to be found among heathens standing under parallel connections. So raging was the infatuation that many esteemed it a daring provocation of the most high God to join with any of the opposite party in the most general acts of divine worship, in family prayer, or even in asking the Lord's blessing upon and returning him thanks for the bounties of common Providence."

Practically, occasional or temporary communion had no existence, only in very rare cases, in any branch of the Presbyterian Church, either in America or Europe, prior to 1810. Its lawfulness was admitted by all except those "pinched to support a favorite and false hypothesis;" but its practice rarely had even a nominal existence.



However shameful it may be, it is nevertheless true, that very little brotherly love existed between the various branches of the Presbyterian Church for more than a century prior to the organization of the Associate Reformed Church. It would do the cause of Christianity no good were the abusive epithets which they heaped upon each other repeated. Such being the case, no matter how they interpreted the XXVIth chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith, they could not and did not practice occasional communion.

It must be remembered that by occasional communion the fathers of the Associate Reformed Church did not mean the same thing as that which, at the present day is denominated catholic communion. This latitudinarian scheme, as it was called, they regarded as "subversive of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and as having a natural tendency to promote error and to extinguish zeal for many important parts of the gospel."

It is clear that the founders of the Associate Reformed Church desired and designed to be, on the communion question, both in theory and practice, neither absolutely restricted nor absolutely catholic. They endeavored to avoid both these, as they thought, unscriptural extremes, and to practice a communion which was consistent with law and order. They did not design to unchurch all other churches by saying that under no circumstances their members would be allowed to commune with them; neither did they design opening the door of the church so wide that all who claimed to be Christians would be admitted to sealing ordinances.

Whether Dr. John M. Mason and his infant congregation, situated as they were, violated the law and order of the Associate Reformed Church, is a question which does not admit of positive affirmative or negative answer. If it is tested by the practice of the Associate, the Associate Reformed, the Reformed Presbyterian, or the Church of Scotland, it was certainly contrary to the common law of the church; for "no such event had ever before occurred in America or in Europe." But if the Act is examined with respect to its conformity to the deliverance of the Associate Reformed Synod, the conclusion would, in all probability be that Dr. Mason and his people only



enjoyed a privilege granted them by the laws of the church. In 1811, the matter was brought before the General Synod by the following:

It was moved by Dr. Gray and Mr. Dick :

WHEREAS, Reports are in circulation, and generally believed, that the Rev. John M. Mason and the Rev. Messrs. James M. Matthews and John X. Clark have entered into ministerial and Christian communion with another church, which has excited a great deal of dissatisfaction in several parts of our church ; *And whereas*, It is the duty of this court to enquire into matters which affect the peace and unity of the church ; therefore,

*Resolved*, That a committee be appointed to enquire into the truth of said report, and into the circumstances of the fact, if it prove to be a fact.

The resolution was adopted, and a committee consisting of Dr. Gray, Messrs. Mairs, Henderson, McChord and McWilliams was appointed.

This committee concluded that "the shortest way for gaining an accurate knowledge of the facts and circumstances in the case was to enquire at the mouth of the brethren themselves." This they accordingly did, and after each one of the brethren against whom complaint was brought had made his statement, the committee reported as follows :

After Dr. Mason was released from the pastoral charge of the First congregation in the city of New York, and a part of that congregation was erected into a separate vacancy, to which he was appointed supply, it became necessary for this new congregation to obtain a place of meeting for their public worship. This they found no easy task; but were defeated in their attempts to procure a temporary accommodation until the house which they contemplated building should be completed for their reception. At last the trustees of that Presbyterian Church, of which Dr. Romeyn is pastor, granted free use of their meeting house at such times as did not interfere with the seasons of their own worship. And Dr. Mason, with the vacancy under his care, have since that time held their meetings in said house, assembling after the dismissal of Dr. Romeyn's church, on the Lord's day, both forenoon and afternoon.

This circumstance introduced the two societies to the most intimate acquaintance, and occasioned each frequently to wait on the ministrations of the other. The consequence was a high degree of mutual affection, confidence and esteem. On the first occasion that Dr. Mason administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to his congregation, it was, on consultation with the session, thought proper to admit Dr. Romeyn and his people to the communion.

When Dr. Romeyn next administered the Lord's Supper, an invitation was given to the people of Dr. Mason's charge to participate, and it was accepted.

The intercommunion thus began has continued ever since. But it is not viewed by Dr. Mason and the people of his charge as any thing else than the application of the principle expressed in Chapter XXVI, Section 2, of the Confession of Faith; nor as involving the question of communion with any other church than that



one in which they are, in the Providence of God, so peculiarly connected. Nor is it contemplated to continue, after they shall obtain a separate place of public worship, which they are making preparation to build.

With respect to ministerial communion, the following is the fact: That a few Sabbaths since, Dr. Mason received an invitation from Dr. Romeyn to conduct the public worship of his congregation, which he accepted; and on that occasion used the established order of worship in the church. Mr. Matthews, who has no pastoral charge, joined in the communion before stated, as a member of Dr. Mason's church; but has never held ministerial communion with any other than the Associate Reformed Church. He looks upon this as merely occasional communion, rendered proper by the peculiarity of circumstances, and not as involving the question of communion with any other congregation than that of Dr. Romeyn; nor with that under circumstances different from the present.

The case of Mr. Clarke is somewhat differently circumstanced. Being indisposed, and having engaged a brother minister to fill his pulpit, he went to Dr. Miller's church; and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper being that day dispensed, he accepted an invitation and participated. He has never engaged in ministerial communion out of the Associate Reformed Church.

On reviewing all these facts and circumstances, the committee found itself involved in considerable difficulty. On the one hand they see no sufficient cause to depart from that restricted communion in the seals of the new covenant which has hitherto obtained in the Associate Reformed Church; much less can they approve of that vague and indiscriminate communion which prevails in different parts of the land, and which, by rendering the ascertainment of Christian principles and character impossible, tends to make men indifferent to the faith, piety and righteousness of those whom they recognize as brethren in the Lord Jesus, and with whom they associate in the most solemn acts of religious worship. Also, everything tending to create jealousies, destroy confidence and mar the peace and unity of the Associate Reformed Church is deeply to be regretted.

On the other hand, they cannot but acknowledge that the congregation in New York was placed in unusual circumstances. They were, in the holy providence of God, connected with the church of Dr. Romeyn by very tender ties; and they had full means of being morally satisfied respecting the faith and character of those with whom they were to hold communion. A declinature on their part to admit to their communion those whom they sustained on due means of knowledge, as brethren in Christ with whom they were daily associating in other acts of religious worship, and who were displaying great tenderness and good offices toward them, might have chilled Christian love on both sides, led to invidious inquiries and altercations and have exposed Christianity to derision in the eyes of its enemies. They must have anticipated, and *did anticipate* that the step they were taking would create uneasiness in the breasts of their brethren in other parts of the country. Thus situated, it must have been painful for them to reflect that, act as they might, they must give dissatisfaction to some persons. It is for this Synod to judge, whether, under all the circumstances, the conduct of these ministers and that congregation was Christian and judicious, calculated to promote the interests of Christ's Kingdom, on the spot where the event took place; as also whether it was compatible with that regard to peace and harmony so incumbent on those connected by the solemn bonds of ecclesiastical covenant.



In regard to the ministerial communion which Dr. Mason held with Dr. Romeyn, the only circumstance which has created any displeasure is that of the psalmody used on the occasion.

On Mr. Clarke's conduct the committee cannot but look with disapprobation. They do not think it was his duty to neglect assembling with his own church, though another minister was to lead the public offices. And they cannot see that the providence of God called him, on so casual an event as that of stepping into a church during the period of administering the Lord's Supper, to join in that holy ordinance, knowing, as he must have done, that such conduct would displease and grieve a great portion of that part of the church of God with which he was connected; while a different conduct could give no offense to the family of faith.

The facts in the case having been clearly, fully and impartially set forth in the above report, at a subsequent session of the Synod, the following resolution was offered by the Rev. Matthew Henderson, Jr., and the Rev. Mungo Dick.

WHEREAS, It appears that Dr. Mason and Messrs. Matthews and Clarke have joined in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper with the Presbyterian Church of North America; *And whereas*, It also appears that Dr. Mason has ministerially joined with said church in the use of psalms, the composition of which is merely human—all which being contrary to the established order of the Associate Reformed Church, and having a tendency to injure the cause of the Redeemer in their hands; therefore,

*Resolved*, That the Synod do declare their decided disapprobation of the deportment of said brethren in the premises, and command them to return to the established order of the church.

When the vote on this resolution was taken, three voted in favor of it, thirteen voted against it, and two were silent. It was during the consideration of this resolution that Dr. J. M. Mason delivered the most powerful speech of his life. It consumed three hours in its delivery, and was ever after spoken of as the "mighty speech."

The only reasonable interpretation of the vote of the General Synod is that the overwhelming majority of the members present were disposed to interpret the action of the brethren, Mason, Matthews and Clarke, as not censurable. It was, perhaps, unfortunate that the resolution was so framed as to place the three on trial at the same time, and especially since two charges were brought up against Dr. Mason, and one only against Messrs. Matthews and Clarke.

So far as the inter-communion of Dr. Mason and his congregation, of which Mr. Matthews claimed to be a member, with Dr. Romeyn and his congregation was concerned, it is almost certain that it was allowable on a strict construction of the de-



liverances of the Synod on various occasions. Dr. Mason did not, at the time, justify it on any other ground than the peculiar and extraordinary circumstances in which he and his congregation were placed. Further, he declared that it was neither his desire nor intention to practice this occasional communion after his church was completed. The case of Mr. Matthews and Dr. Mason so far were identical.

The case of Mr. Clarke, as the committee correctly say, was different. Having engaged Mr. Stansbury to fill his pulpit, he left his own church and went to worship in another, and one of a different denomination. He asserted that this was without any previous concert. No doubt this was true; but beyond all controversy it must also have been without any regard for common propriety. By no just interpretation could his communing with the congregation of Dr. Miller be regarded as the occasional communion contemplated by the fathers of the Associate Reformed Church. Clearly, Mr. Clarke violated not only the law and practice of the Associate Reformed Church, but transgressed the rules and regulations which are well established in every community of Christians. It is expected, and rightly, too, that every individual will worship in his own church when there are services in that church. To go elsewhere, is to treat those with whom he is denominationally connected with marked disrespect and want of social and Christian courtesy.

The other and graver charge brought against Dr. Mason was that while conducting public worship for Dr. Romeyn, he used "psalms the composition of which is merely human." This was a plain violation of the written rules and regulations of the Associate Reformed Church. It is not known on what grounds he attempted to vindicate this act. The language of the third Section of the third chapter of the Directory for Public Worship, adopted in 1799, is too positive to suppose that he undertook to claim that his course was lawful. No matter how often "psalms the composition of which is merely human" have been sung by Associate Reformed people—no matter whether by preachers, elders, deacons or private members—it has been done, in every instance, in direct violation of the law of the church.



The law of the Associate Reformed Church, from its earliest existence down to the present time, ever has been that only the psalms contained in the Book of Psalms in the Bible are to be used in the public and private worship of God. No version of the psalms was ever formally adopted by the Associate Reformed Church. The use of the Scotch version was simply continued, but not formally adopted. The reason why its use was continued was mainly because it was, as a metrical translation, regarded as far superior to any and all that had preceded it.

By the vote of the General Synod, Messrs. Mason, Matthews and Clarke were not censured.

No doubt, there were some who were ready to approve of their course; but it is not fair to interpret the negative vote of the Synod as a vote of approbation.

The discussion of Messrs. Henderson and Dick's resolution took place on Saturday. On Monday morning Messrs. Ebenezer Dickey and Alexander Porter moved the following preamble and resolution:

WHEREAS, A diversity of judgment and practice has been found to exist among the ministers and members of this church relative to the application of the doctrine of the Confession of Faith concerning the communion of saints; *And whereas*, The course of correct procedure in this matter must depend, in a great measure, upon circumstances which cannot be provided for by any general rule; therefore,

*Resolved*, That the judicatories, ministers and members of this church be, and hereby are, entreated and required to exercise mutual forbearance in the premises; and in the use of their discretion to observe mutual tenderness and brotherly love, studying to avoid whatever may be contrary thereto; and giving special heed to the preservation of sound and efficient discipline.

The above was adopted almost unanimously—the vote being sixteen for it, and three against it. So far as the resolution itself is concerned, it certainly seems to be fair and impartial. No advantage is taken of either party. Both parties are “required to exercise mutual forbearance.” It failed, however, to satisfy a very large portion of the church. The Synod of Scioto and the Synod of the South both felt aggrieved.

The resolution of Messrs. Dickey and Porter was designed as a check to all parties. There were some who were more rigid in their demands than the written law of the church required, while there were others who, by their practice, gave



unmistakable signs that they held both the written law of the church and the law as established by the practice of a godly ancestry in contempt.

Both parties, no doubt, might be characterized as extremists. The one looked on the attainments of the fathers with a sacred veneration; the other viewed the practices of their sainted ancestors with a feeling of commingled shame and disgust.



## CHAPTER XV.

RESULT of the Action of the Synod in Mason, Matthews and Clarke Case—Parties Lose Confidence in Each Other—The General Synod “Intermit the Functions of the Subordinate Synods”—General Synod Always Meet at Philadelphia—The Synods of the South and West Practically Excluded—Remonstrances Against the Action of the General Synod of 1811 by These—Synod of Scioto Withdrew in 1820—Synod of the Carolinas Became Independent in 1822—Synod of New York Never Meets—A Majority of the People Opposed to the Course Pursued by General Synod—The Result, had the Matter been Submitted to a Popular Vote—Correspondence Between the Synod of Scioto and the Synod of the South—The Condition of the Associate Reformed Church—Synod of the South Appoint a Fast Day—The Bishop-Rankin Difficulty—Settled to the Satisfaction of Neither Party—Character of Messrs. Bishop and Rankin—The Psalmody and Communion Question the Real Cause of the Difficulty Between Messrs. Bishop and Rankin—Dr. Mason’s Plea—Mr. Rankin’s Reply—The Downward Tendency of the General Synod—The Psalmody Question Revived—Ebenezer Clarke’s Resolutions—A New Version of the Psalms Called for by a Few—The Reformed Dutch Version Allowed—The Union Spirit—Negotiations with the Reformed Dutch—This Broken Up by Similar Negotiations with the General Assembly—A Union Formed with the General Assembly—Basis and Condition of this Union—The Vote on Union—No Union Actually Formed—Names of the Ministers Going into the Union—The Theological Library Removed to Princeton—Law Suit for its Recovery—Library Restored in 1837.

The action of the General Synod in the Mason, Matthews and Clarke case was attended with the most disastrous results. The Associate Reformed Church not only became divided in opinion on the communion and psalmody question, but the opposing parties lost confidence in the integrity of each other. The latitudinarian party, as if afraid that the subordinate Synods would thwart their plans and frustrate all their schemes, in 1810, prevailed upon the General Synod to pass an Act “intermitting the functions of the subordinate Synods.” The passage of this Act virtually robbed the subordinate Synods of all power and control in the church.

When the General Synod was organized, it was designed that its meetings should be, not annual, but “every two or three years.” This was changed, and annual meetings ordered.



By a kind of ecclesiastical trickery, the General Synod always met in the city of Philadelphia. In those days, when railroads and steamboats had no existence, and the mode of travel was entirely on horseback, the attendance upon the meetings of the General Synod was accompanied with no small expense, great loss of time, and very considerable wear and tear of both body and mind to the members of the Synods of the Carolinas and Scioto. In addition to this these two Synods came to the conclusion, and rightly too, that they had very little weight in staying the downward tendency of things.

Remonstrances against the action of the General Synod of 1811 were sent up to its subsequent meeting by the Synod of Scioto, by the Synod of the Carolinas, and by several presbyteries and single congregations. All this availed nothing. The result was that on the 27th of April, 1820, the Synod of Scioto formally renounced its subordination to the General Synod and constituted itself into an independent Synod under the name, "The Associate Reformed Synod of the West."

In 1821, the Synod of the Carolinas asked permission of the General Synod to withdraw and become an independent Synod. This was granted, and on the 1st of April, 1822, it was constituted under the name, "The Associate Reformed Synod of the South," which name it still bears.

The withdrawal of these two Synods left in connection with the General Synod only the Synod of Pennsylvania and the Synod of New York. The connection of the latter, however, was only nominal. From the autumn of 1812 to the spring of 1822, a period of more than nine years, it never met. The reason was because, "the bitter and personal controversies upon psalmody and communion had so distracted and disheartened many of the ministers, that they felt like letting every thing outside of their pastoral charges go by default." It was not because they acquiesced in the action of the General Synod of 1810, in intermitting the functions of the subordinate synods. Against this action they remonstrated.

That the reader may have a clear and distinct knowledge of the results of the action of the General Synod of 1811, it is necessary to give a brief statement of the facts.



As already intimated, the course pursued by the General Synod failed to give satisfaction. A large minority of the ministers and a majority of the lay members of the church were decidedly opposed to the course which the General Synod pursued. Had the questions been separated and left to the popular vote of the denomination, it is almost certain that Dr. Mason and the Rev. J. X. Clarke would have been censured; the former for using a psalmody forbidden by the church, and the latter for practicing a communion not occasional, but clearly irregular.

It is also highly probable that no censure would have been passed upon Dr. Mason and Mr. Matthews for holding communion with the congregation of Dr. Romeyn. By some the conduct of these brethren would not have been approved; but the probability is that even by them the matter would have been overlooked.

As it was, however, the church was greatly agitated. The Synod of Scioto feeling deeply aggrieved, met in Chillicothe, Ohio, on the 17th of October, 1811, and adopted the following preamble and resolutions:

WHEREAS, In consequence of reports having been in circulation that the Rev. Messrs. Dr. Mason, J. M. Matthews and J. X. Clarke, had joined in communion with the Presbyterian Church, and that Dr. Mason having received an invitation from Dr. Romeyn to conduct the public worship of his congregation, had conformed on that occasion to the established order of worship in that church, which reports had excited no small degree of dissatisfaction in various parts of this church; *And whereas*, By direction of General Synod, at their last meeting, an inquiry had been instituted to ascertain the truth of these reports, which it appeared were well founded; *And whereas*, A resolution was brought before Synod condemnatory of the conduct of these brethren in the premises, which resolution was negatived, thereby, as it is supposed, justifying and approving their conduct; *And whereas*, It appears to this Synod that instead of being passed over in this manner, it merited disapprobation; therefore,

*Resolved*, That this Synod do hereby express their decided disapprobation in the conduct of these brethren in violating the order of communion established in this church; and of Dr. Mason, in particular, in using a system of psalmody which the constitution and standards of the church not only do not recognize, but condemn.

*Resolved*, That this Synod direct, as it hereby does, the different Presbyteries of which it is composed, to lay before the General Synod, at its next meeting, temperate yet firm remonstrances, against their decision, in negativing the resolution referred to above.

*Resolved*, That a letter expressing the sentiments of this Synod, on these subjects, be addressed and forwarded to Dr. Mason.



The resolution referred to as being negatived by the General Synod was that offered by Messrs. Henderson and Dick.

On the next day, October 18th, the Synod of Scioto again met and passed the following resolution:

"That the clerk be, as he hereby is, directed to forward without delay, to the clerk or some other member of each of the other particular synods of the Associate Reformed Church a copy of the first and second resolutions."

The Rev. John Steel, clerk of the Synod of Scioto, sent to the Rev. Isaac Grier, clerk of the Synod of the Carolinas, the two resolutions referred to above. These, together with an explanatory letter by Mr. Steel, were read and considered by the Synod of the Carolinas at its meeting on the 3d of April, 1812, at King's Creek, Newberry county, S. C.

The Synod of the Carolinas returned an answer to these resolutions, in which they "express their concurrence in sentiment with the Scioto brethren."

The Associate Reformed Church began at this time to present an awful spectacle of human weakness and human passions. The General Synod possessed all the power, and outside of the Synod of Philadelphia there were few, either of the ministers or lay members of the church but looked upon it with feelings of commingled shame, sorrow and distrust. As one among many evidences of this fact, it may be mentioned that in 1812 the Synod of the Carolinas appointed a day of fasting, assigning as the first and most important reason for such appointment, "the afflictions and embarrassments of the church in general, and our own church in particular."

In 1812, a quarrel sprung up between Messrs. Bishop and Rankin, which, after being continued for about six years, was adjudicated by a commission of the General Synod, to the satisfaction of neither party.

This difficulty originated as follows: The Presbytery of Kentucky appointed, in 1812, Messrs. Bishop and Rankin to prepare a pastoral letter to the churches on the duty of ministerial support. The letter was written by Mr. Bishop, assisted by Mr. Rankin, and when presented to the presbytery passed without opposition. Such being the case, the presbytery, and not the committee, became responsible for whatever sentiments it contained. In this pastoral letter, the tithe law, sup-



posed to be once in force in the Old Testament church, was advocated. This gave offense in some sections, and especially in the Ebenezer congregation, of which Mr. Bishop was pastor.

In order to place the matter in a proper light and restore peace and harmony in the Ebenezer congregation, the presbytery addressed an official letter to the people of Ebenezer, stating that the pastoral letter was to be considered as the production of the presbytery, and not of any single individual.

At that time Mr. Bishop was, in connection with some other clergymen, publishing a religious monthly called the *Evangelical Record and Western Review*. In this monthly Mr. Bishop published the official letter of the Kentucky Presbytery to the Ebenezer congregation, and also defended the pastoral letter. This may have been defensible, but for some cause which does not clearly appear, he said some hard things about Mr. Rankin. He also published in the same work an article entitled "The Origin of the Rankinites."

The course pursued by Mr. Bishop was calculated to offend Mr. Rankin and his friends. This it did. The matter came before the presbytery for adjudication. Mr. Bishop did not deny the charges he had made against Mr. Rankin. On the contrary, he offered to justify his conduct by proving that the charges were true. This the presbytery refused to allow him to do, on the ground that even if the charges were true, Mr. Bishop was censurable for having published them to the world, instead of proceeding against Mr. Rankin in accordance with the discipline of the church.

In October, 1815, the Presbytery of Kentucky suspended Mr. Bishop from the ministry. He refused to submit, and appealed to the General Synod. In May, 1816, the General Synod declared the act of the presbytery irregular, thereby removing the sentence of suspension, but directed that Mr. Bishop be rebuked by his presbytery on account of the severe charges which he had brought against Mr. Rankin. To this he also refused to submit, and forwarded reasons for so acting to the General Synod of 1817. A committee was appointed by the Synod to proceed to Kentucky, gather up all the facts in the case, and report to the Synod. This committee did nothing.

In May, 1818, a *commission*, consisting of John M. Mason, Ebenezer Dickey and John Linn, ministers; and John Ken-



nedy, Silas E. Weir and Jeremiah Morrow, elders, was appointed for the purpose of taking the whole matter into consideration.

That they might be able to conclude the affair finally, the General Synod conferred upon this commission full power to do every thing necessary to bring the case to a final conclusion. Their action was to be subject, however, to review by next General Synod.

In September the *commission* met in Lexington and proceeded to adjudicate the difficulty. In accordance with the powers conferred upon them, Mr. Bishop was made the prosecutor and Mr. Rankin the defendant.

Mr. Bishop was first required to submit to the rebuke previously ordered by the General Synod. Having complied with this requirement, he was then called upon to prefer his charges against Mr. Rankin. This he did. So soon as his testimony was all given in, Mr. Rankin asked that eight days be allowed him to prepare his defense. This the commission granted; but the time having expired, Mr. Rankin handed in a paper declining the authority of the commission. The trial went on, notwithstanding the absence of the defendant. The decision of the commission was that "Mr. Bishop, the prosecutor, should be publicly rebuked for the publication he had issued, and that Mr. Rankin, the defendant, being convicted of lying and slander, be, as he hereby is, suspended from the gospel ministry."

It would be a hopeless task, were it undertaken, to decide whether this decision was just and equitable or not. No doubt both Mr. Bishop and Rankin were censurable. Both were men of fine natural abilities and no mean attainments. Mr.—afterwards Doctor—Bishop was a fine classical scholar and distinguished educator.

Notwithstanding all this, he was rash and impulsive, given to speak unadvisedly, and frequently dealt in language which cut like a sword. His piety, so far as is known, was never called in question; but, withal, he was disposed to push his own opinions and pursue his own counsel. In the autumn of 1802 he came to America, and was sent by the Associate Reformed Synod to the Presbytery of Kentucky. In the summer of 1803 he received a call from the united congregations of Ebenezer and New Providence.



About the same time he was elected to a professorship in Transylvania University, at Lexington. When the time arrived for his ordination and installation, the presbytery required him to resign his professorship. This he refused to do, and the presbytery not only refused to proceed with his ordination and installation, but prosecuted and rebuked him for insubordination. The matter was referred to the Synod and the decree of the presbytery was reversed, but it was not until June, 1808, that his ordination and installation took place.

Of Mr. Rankin it is difficult to speak with certainty. That he was the occasion of much disturbance in the church cannot be denied; but of much of that disturbance he was probably only the innocent occasion. Mr. Rankin came from the Presbyterian Church to the Associate Reformed Church about the year 1793. The reason he left the Presbyterian Church was the introduction of Watts' "imitation" of the Psalms of the Bible into the worship of God by some congregations in connection with the Presbyterian Church. Against this innovation he set himself with all his might, but not being able to prevent it, he withdrew, or rather because he opposed this innovation he was suspended by the Presbytery of Transylvania from the exercise of all ministerial functions. To this sentence of the presbytery he refused to submit, and made application to the Second Associate Reformed Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and was by that presbytery received into the Associate Reformed Church.

It is highly probable that the psalmody and communion question was the main factor in the Bishop-Rankin difficulty. Mr. Bishop and Mr. Rankin held antagonistic views on those subjects.

In 1819 Mr. Bishop left the Associate Reformed Church and joined the General Assembly Presbyterian Church. This shows that he either had no conscientious scruples about psalmody and communion, or that he acted contrary to the convictions of his conscience.

In 1816 Dr. J. M. Mason published his work entitled "A Plea for Sacramental Communion on Catholic Principles." The position taken in this work by Dr. Mason is far in advance of that assumed by him as the position held by the Associate Reformed Church when his case was before the Synod



in 1811. So much was Mr. Rankin opposed to the scheme advocated by Dr. Mason that he wrote an answer to Mason's Plea.

The difficulty between Mr. Bishop and Mr. Rankin was settled in a way that was calculated to do great injury to the cause of Jesus Christ. The appointing of the commission was an unpresbyterial act. Mr. Bishop never brought any charges against Mr. Rankin before the Presbytery of Kentucky. So far as it appears, the whole matter was conducted in a way not sanctioned by the principles of Presbyterianism.

Mr. Bishop should have brought charges against Mr. Rankin before the Presbytery of Kentucky. Had the Presbytery decided contrary to his views of law, then he should have appealed to the Synod of Scioto, and had his supposed rights not been respected by the Synod of Scioto, then he had the right to appeal to the General Synod as a court of final resort. Unfortunately, the General Synod had, in 1810, "intermitted the functions of the subordinate synods," and in the Bishop-Rankin case the General Synod took upon itself to adjudicate a matter which properly belonged to the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Kentucky.

The tendency now was to the rapid dissolution of the General Synod. In a few, and in only a few sections of the church there was a desire to thrust the old Scotch version of the Psalms out of the church and introduce a new version. The rough Hebrew-Scotch version, with its lines occasionally too long or too short, grated on the ears of the rising generation, and an incessant clamor for a new version was raised by the dissatisfied few.

It was the version that first agitated the church. This was as far as the psalmody question ever reached in the Associate Reformed Church. So far as is remembered, no man holding any official connection with the Associate Reformed Church has ever dared to advocate the introduction of hymns, the composition of which is merely human, into the worship of God. No doubt there were, at various periods, a number of individuals who did not hold the high ground which has ever been held by strict Seceders on this subject. These generally sought connections where they could practice in accordance with their views.



Sometime during the year 1810, the question of a new metrical version of the Psalms began to be discussed in certain Associate Reformed circles. Ebenezer Clark, an elder of Argyle, New York, wrote to Dr. J. M. Mason a letter in which he stated that he had drawn up and presented to presbytery a petition on the subject of an improved version of the Psalms. In that letter Mr. Clark states that "the presbytery were requested to petition Synod to furnish the church with a metre version of the Scripture psalms, hymns and songs adapted to the present condition of the church and the improved state of the English language." The petition addressed to the presbytery encountered some opposition, but not to the extent that was feared.

Dr. Mason approved of the course that was adopted by Mr. Clark, and stated that the subject had been before his mind for several years. The matter came before the General Synod soon after this, and a committee, consisting of Drs. Mason and Gray, and Revs. John X. Clarke, J. M. Matthews and Alexander Proudfoot, was appointed "to procure an improved version of Scriptural psalmody, and to have the same in readiness for such order as the General Synod shall see meet to make at the next stated meeting."

No version was made, and no good grew out of the resolution. The majority of the members of the church regarded a new version of the Psalms and the scheme of occasional communion on very latitudinarian principles, as inseparably connected.

In 1816 the General Synod passed an Act permitting such congregations of the Associate Reformed Church as might judge it for edification, "to use the version of the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament recently prepared for the use of the Reformed Dutch Church."

Whether there were serious objections to the Reformed Dutch version of the Psalms or not, is a matter that need not be discussed; but it is a fact that only a few Associate Reformed congregations—only three, perhaps—availed themselves of the liberty granted them by the highest court of the church, and these only for a very short time.



A spirit of union seems early to have taken possession of at least some of the members of the Associate Reformed Church. In 1816, "a regular and constant correspondence" was inaugurated with the Dutch Reformed Church, and in 1820 a committee was appointed by the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church to confer with a similar committee to be appointed by the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, with a view to effecting a union of the two denominations.

A basis of union, consisting of eight Articles, was drawn up. This basis the Reformed Dutch Synod overtured to its classes. These reported almost unanimously in its favor.

In 1821, the leaders of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church, having a prospect of a union with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, politely "declined, for the present, all further proceedings relative thereto, resting satisfied with the continuance of the established plan of intercourse and correspondence."

The General Synod was now nearing its final dissolution. For more than ten years this event had been regarded by many in every section of the church as inevitable. As the hour of its dissolution approached, the signs of the event became more manifest.

In May, 1821, the General Synod, as usual, met in the city of Philadelphia. From the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, then in session in the same city, an overture was received by the General Synod, proposing an organic union of the two denominations.

A committee of its members was appointed by each court to conduct the negotiations. After some consultation the following plan was agreed upon as a basis of union:

1. The different presbyteries of the Associate Reformed Church shall either retain their separate organization, or be amalgamated with those of the General Assembly, at their own choice.

2. The theological seminary at Princeton, under the care of the General Assembly, and the theological seminary of the Associate Reformed Church, shall be consolidated.

3. The theological library and funds belonging to the Associate Reformed Church shall be transferred and belong to the seminary at Princeton.

This plan of union, if such it may be called, was overtured, or pretended to be overtured, to the presbyteries.



On the 15th of May, 1822, the General Synod again met in Philadelphia. Twenty-two delegates had been commissioned, but only sixteen attended—six from the Presbytery of Philadelphia; four from the Presbytery of New York; three from the Presbytery of Saratoga; and three from the Presbytery of Big Spring. The Presbytery of Washington was without a representative, and one delegate was absent from the Presbytery of Big Spring, and another from the Presbytery of Saratoga.

When the overture in reference to the proposed union with the Presbyterian Church came up, it was found that the Presbyteries of Saratoga and Washington were, without a dissenting vote, against it, and in the Presbytery of Big Spring, only a very small minority were in favor of it. The only Presbyteries in favor of it were those of New York and Philadelphia, and in each of these there was a respectable minority opposed to it.

On strict Presbyterian principles, the overture was rejected. Of the five presbyteries at that time in connection with the General Synod, three voted against the overture, two unanimously; one with a small minority in favor of it, and not a single presbytery unanimously in favor of it. In accordance with a well-established principle of Presbyterian church government, the overture was no longer before the General Synod. That court, however, took a different view of the matter.

In 1810, it had, by the passage of an Act, intermitted the functions of the subordinate Synods, and now it proceeded to ignore the prerogatives and usurp the functions of the presbyteries.

The matter was discussed for four days, and on Tuesday, the 21st of May it was

*Resolved*, That this Synod approve, and hereby do ratify the plan of union between the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and the Associate Reformed Church, proposed by commissioners from said churches.

Seven voted in favor of the above resolution; five voted against it, and four were silent. Those who voted in the affirmative were James Laurie, the moderator; Ebenezer Dickey and John M. Duncan, ministers; Joseph Nourse, James Martin, Robert Patterson and John Forsyth, elders. Those voting in the negative were Robert Forrest, Thomas Smith, James



Otterson, ministers ; James Lefferz and James McCulloch, elders. Those who did not vote were William Wert Phillips, Robert B. E. McLeod and John Linn, ministers ; and elder Robert Blake.

Of the seven who voted in the affirmative, all were in connection with the Presbytery of Philadelphia, except elder John Forsyth.

Thomas Smith claimed that seven was not a majority of sixteen. The moderator ruled that silent votes were to be counted with the majority, and that the resolution was adopted. Those who voted in the negative protested against his decision, because it was in manifest opposition to the voice of the church.

Of the six delegates who were absent, it was known that five were opposed to the proposed union. Objections and protests availed nothing. The few were determined to rule. The union must be formed, was their motto, no matter what the presbyteries or single individuals said to the contrary.

That this union of 1822 was not a union of the Associate Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church, is evident, from the fact that only eleven ministers, and perhaps about the same number of pastoral charges acceded to it. The names of those ministers who went into the Presbyterian Church under the cloak of that farcical transaction were Ebenezer Dickey, John M. Duncan, George Junkin, James Laurie, Robert McCarter, Charles G. McLean, Robert B. E. McLeod, John M. Mason, Ebenezer K. Maxwell, John Mulligan and William Wert Phillips.

All of these were men of more than ordinary powers, and many of them men of massive intellects. They were also men of exemplary piety. It is, however, almost certain that they marred their happiness, and to some extent injured their influence by so inconsiderately and rashly forming a union with the Presbyterian Church. To say that they believed that by that act they expressed the desires of the Associate Reformed people, is to charge them with gross and willful ignorance ; and to say that they knew they were acting in opposition to the desires of the great body of the church to which they belonged, is to place them before the world in the unenviable attitude of self-constituted petty tyrants.



The moderator having announced that the plan of union was adopted, the General Synod began to make arrangements for its own extinction. A committee was appointed to transfer the theological library of the Associate Reformed Seminary from New York to Princeton, New Jersey. Mr. J. Arbuckle, clerk of the Synod, and pastor-elect of Spruce Street Church, Philadelphia, a member of this committee, asked leave of absence that he might go at once to New York for the purpose of removing the library before any legal obstacles might be thrown in the way of the transfer.

This indicated that they expected to encounter opposition, because they felt, no doubt, that they had acted in bad faith.

On Thursday, the 23d, they met and drew up a pastoral letter explanatory of their action. The clerk was ordered to deposit all the minutes and documents belonging to the General Synod with the session of the Spruce Street congregation.

The General Assembly having been officially informed of their action, invited them to seats in the Assembly as constituent members.

The closing moment of the General Synod had now arrived. It has been customary, in all branches of the Church of Scotland, to conclude the sessions of all ecclesiastical courts by singing the 133d Psalm.

Had the union so recently formed been entirely agreeable to all parties, this would have been exceedingly appropriate; but for some reason this was not done. In its place they very appropriately sung the 130th Psalm, and finally adjourned. Two ministers, McLeod and Duncan, and two elders, Nourse and Patterson, took their seats in the General Assembly. The rest, tired and sad, all went home, and many of them sank into obscurity, or became notorious. Thus, after a stormy existence of eighteen years, perished the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church, and with it the subordinate Synod of Pennsylvania.

The Synod of Scioto having, on the 27th of April, 1820, dissolved and reconstituted, as an independent Synod, and the Synod of the Carolinas having, in accordance with permission granted by the General Synod, become independent, on the 1st of April, 1822, the Synod of New York alone remained to assert the rights of the Associate Reformed Church.



A *pro re nata* meeting of the Synod of New York was ordered by its last moderator, the Rev. Robert Proudfoot, at Galway, on the 13th of February, 1822.

The Presbyteries of Saratoga and Washington were represented by both ministers and elders, while Mr. Daniel Farrington was the only representative from the Presbytery of New York. At this meeting of the Synod of New York, the following resolutions were adopted :

*Resolved*, That in the opinion of this Synod, the union proposed with the General Assembly, is inexpedient, and calculated to disturb the peace of our churches.

*Resolved*, That this Synod will maintain its existence, in its present form, whatever be the decision of the General Synod upon the contemplated union.

With the exception of one dissenting vote—that of the Rev. Ebenezer K. Maxwell—these resolutions were unanimously adopted. The Synod having passed these resolutions, adjourned, to meet at Newburgh, on the 13th of September, 1822.

During the interval, the union was formed. The Synod of New York, however, met at the appointed time, and was opened with a sermon by the Rev. James Scrimgeour. There were present nineteen members, and three were absent. It was found that there still remained thirteen ministers and about twenty-five congregations that had not and did not design going into the union.

At this meeting of the Synod, a memorial to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in reference to restoring the library and funds transferred to Princeton, by Act of the General Synod, was prepared. This memorial was presented to the General Assembly in 1823, by Alexander Proudfoot and Robert Forrest. It was, however, for prudential reasons, withdrawn.

For about seven years afterwards, no formal effort was made to recover this property. In 1830, another memorial was prepared and placed in the hands of the Rev. Joseph McCarrell and Mr. John Forsyth, to be presented to the General Assembly at its next meeting.

In May, 1831, the commissioners—McCarrell and Forsyth—appeared before the General Assembly and presented the memorial. The matter was referred by the Assembly to a special



committee, which brought in an adverse report. This report, however, was not adopted by the Assembly, but referred, together with the memorial, to the trustees of the theological seminary at Princeton.

A meeting of the board of trustees and commissioners was held in April, 1832; but the trustees declined to decide the matter, and referred it back to the Assembly, advising that the memorial be rejected.

When the question came up before the Assembly, Dr. McCarrell desired to be heard. This was refused. The commissioners desired to present a written argument. This was also refused.

All friendly negotiations were now barred, and as a last, and only resort, suit was commenced in the court of chancery, in the State of New Jersey. Here the matter lay until July, 1837, when Chancellor Philemon Dickerson made a decree in favor of the complainants. By this decree, the board of trustees of the theological seminary at Princeton were necessitated to return to the Synod of New York, the legal heir of the General Synod, a library of about twenty-five hundred volumes, and two thousand dollars in money.

In 1837, the Synod of the West having spread over an extensive territory, was divided into two synods. The one was denominated the First Associate Reformed Synod of the West, and the other the Second Associate Reformed Synod of the West. At the same time a General Synod was organized. In 1852, the Second Synod of the West was divided, and all the territory west of the State of Indiana erected into a synod called the Synod of Illinois.

In 1855, these three synods and the Synod of New York united upon the simple basis of the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Church as adopted in 1799. On the 26th of May, 1858, these four synods, consisting of two hundred and forty ministers and probationers, and thirty-one thousand two hundred and eighty-four communicants, united with the Associate Synod, thus forming the UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA.



## CHAPTER XVI.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—Its Organization—The Time and Place of the Organization—Strength of the United Presbyterian Church—Present Strength—Number of Presbyteries, Synods, Families, Communicants, Ministers and the Territory of the United Presbyterian Church—Foreign Missions—Basis of Union—Doctrines of the United Presbyterian Church—Number of Psalm-singing Churches in America—All Divided.

Without some account of the United Presbyterian Church, our knowledge of the history and growth of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Churches in America would be imperfect. The United Presbyterian Church of North America is the result of a union formed between the Associate Reformed and the Associate Presbyterian Churches. This union was formally effected in the City Hall of Pittsburg, Pa., on the 26th of May, 1858.

The union was harmonious so far as was possible. The great body of both denominations heartily entered into it. A few congregations and ministers in connection with each of the denominations did not, however, acquiesce with the majority. Some of these sought connection with other Christian denominations, a few afterward went into the Union Church, and others continued to perpetuate the original organizations.

The United Presbyterian Church is by far the largest and most influential of all those denominations in America which trace their ecclesiastical organizations back to the Erskines, or to McMillan and Nairn. In connection with the United Presbyterian Church there were, in 1858, fifty-four thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine communicants; thirty-one thousand three hundred and ninety-eight families; four hundred and nineteen ministers; sixty-five probationers, and about forty students of theology. In connection with the denomination there were five synods and forty-nine presbyteries.

The growth of the United Presbyterian Church has been steady. At present, (1881) there are in connection with it nine synods; sixty-one presbyteries; seven hundred and four ordained ministers; forty-seven licentiates, and sixty-five stu-



dents of theology. The membership, so far as reported, was, in 1881, eighty-two thousand nine hundred and thirty-seven.

The United Presbyterian Church has two theological seminaries—one at Xenia, Ohio, and the other at Allegheny, Pa. In addition to this, it controls five colleges.

The territory occupied by the United Presbyterian Church is very extensive, stretching from Boston to San Francisco. In addition to its labors in the home field, it is extensively engaged in foreign missionary efforts. It has in its connection a presbytery of fourteen members in Egypt. In connection with this presbytery there are more than one thousand communicants. It has also a presbytery in India, in connection with which there are seven members. The success of the United Presbyterian Church, in its missionary labors among the heathen, has been very great.

In forming the United Presbyterian Church, neither the Associate nor the Associate Reformed Churches adopted any new doctrine or practice, or gave up any old doctrines or practices. There was a basis of union, a statement of differences and points of agreement; but at last they were and always had been one except in name. For more than three quarters of a century they had lived as separate organizations, believing and practicing the same thing. The Associate Reformed Church adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith after having eliminated Erastianism from portions of certain chapters. The Associates adopted the same Confession of Faith entire and unchanged, just as it was adopted by the Church of Scotland in 1647; but they emitted testimonies, in which they explained away, as they thought, its Erastian features. Both sung, in private around the fireside, and in the great congregation, nothing but the majestic old Scotch version of the Psalms. As far as it were possible they were one. Certainly they did not differ on any doctrine essential to salvation. Yet for seventy-six years they lived separately and not always on very good terms. The doctrines of the United Presbyterian Church are those contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith. The form of church government is that laid down in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and its directory for worship is of the same origin. Adam Gib could have adopted it. Ebenezer Erskine could have adopted it, and so could Richard Cameron and Donald Cargill.



The wonder is not that the union forming the United Presbyterian Church was effected in 1858, but that it was not effected sooner.

It is painful to think that the psalm-singing churches are so divided. In the two branches of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America there are about two hundred ordained ministers and nearly twenty thousand communicants. In America there are more than twelve hundred psalm-singing congregations, with a baptized membership of more than five hundred thousand, and fully one hundred and twenty thousand communicants. To these about one thousand ministers are preaching the gospel. Unfortunately, they are not united—at least organically united. That they are interested in each other's welfare no one will deny; but still they are divided. That they disagree on minor points will be admitted. Absolute harmony exists only in heaven. In matters purely religious, Associates, Reformed Presbyterians, Associate Reformed Presbyterians and United Presbyterians never have differed. They are, to-day, one in doctrine, one in form of church government, one in worship, and one in everything but—shall we say—politics; and this, and this alone divides them!



## CHAPTER XVII.

SYNOD OF THE CAROLINAS—Present Territory—Former Limits—The Grant of Charles II. in 1663—Territory Visited by Cabot, 1497—Claimed by the English, Spaniards and French—Spanish Attempt a Settlement in 1525—Admiral Coligny's Grant in 1562—Rebault Built Fort Carolina—Fort Carolina Destroyed by the Spaniards—Carolina Became the Property of the King in 1719—Divided into North and South Carolina in 1729—Georgia Settled in 1733—North Carolina, in 1653—South Carolina, in 1670—State of Things in England at That Time—Liberty of Conscience Granted by the Charters—Design Was to Establish Prelacy—Was Legally Established—Covenanters Banished from Scotland to America—Some Came to Carolina—Their Principal Settlements—William Martin's Field of Labor—Petitions Sent from Carolina to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, in 1760—Proudfoot, Mason, Martin, Rodgers, Patten and Clark Sent to the Societies in Carolina—Martin Received a Call from Fourth Creek, in 1774—The Associate Ministers from 1782 to 1799—The Rev. Thomas Clark Comes South in 1782—Returned North in 1783—The Rev. John Jamieson Comes South—Places of Preaching—Dr. Clark Returned to the South, and in 1786 Became Pastor of Cedar Spring and Long Cane—John Boyse Began to Preach at Coddle Creek, Gilead, Prosperity and Hopewell, in 1788—The Covenanters Visited by James Reid in 1790—McGarrah and King Come to South Carolina—Donnelly Licensed and Ordained—Covenanters Emigrate on Account of Slavery—Brick Church Grave-yard.

The Associate Reformed Synod of the South, at present, is spread over Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas and Texas. Originally it embraced only the two Carolinas and Georgia, and was appropriately named Synod of the Carolinas.

It is impossible to say, with absolutely certainty, when settlements were first made in the Carolinas and Georgia by dissenters from the Church of Scotland. A number of circumstances at the time conspired to consign such an event to oblivion.

All that vast territory between the thirty-first and thirty-sixth parallels of north latitude and the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, was, in 1663, granted to Edward, Earl of Clarendon; George, Duke of Albemarle; William, Earl of Craven; John, Lord Berkley; Anthony, Lord Ashley; Sir George Carteret; Sir John Colleton; and Sir William Berkley.



The discovery of the territory which is now embraced by the two Carolinas is long anterior to the granting of this charter. Its first discovery by Europeans was by Sebastian Cabot, in 1497. It was claimed by the English, by the Spaniards and by the French. The English knew it by the names of Virginia and Carolina; the Spaniards called it Florida; and by the French it was sometimes called Florida, and sometimes New France.

In 1520 Vasques de Ayllon, sailing from St. Domingo, explored the coast of South Carolina, and in 1525, under a commission of Charles V., he attempted to make a settlement on the south-western coast. Having, on his first visit, plundered the country and kidnapped many of the unsuspecting natives, whom he reduced to slavery, he was overtaken by the retributive justice of God, and his attempt to plant a colony in South Carolina completely frustrated. In 1562, Admiral Coligny obtained a commission from Charles IX., of France, for the purpose of settling a colony of Protestants in America. The expedition was entrusted to John Ribault. On the 27th of May, his ships anchored at the opening of the bay, to which he gave the name of Port Royal. Having explored the country, he landed, and at a point not far from the site of the present town of Beaufort, South Carolina, he built a fort, which in honor of the King, he named Caroline. From this fort, the country, which, by the aborigines was called *Chickola*, received the name Carolina.

Fort Caroline was destroyed, and those in it cruelly murdered by the Spaniards from St. Augustine, in 1565. After this event, for a period of nearly one hundred years, scarcely an effort was made by any European power to settle the territory.

The extensive tract of country granted by Charles II., to eight noblemen, in 1719, passed out of their possession into the hands of the King of England. In 1729 an official order was given for the division of the territory, but the separation was not actually effected until 1732. Since that time one part has borne the name of North Carolina, and the other that of South Carolina.



In 1732 that portion of South Carolina west of the Savannah River was, by George II., cut off and given to another company, that a home might be provided for his "poor subjects, who, from misfortune and want of employment, had been reduced to great necessity." In honor of George II. it was called Georgia. Its settlement was begun in 1733, under the direction of General James Oglethorpe.

The settlement of that portion of the territory which is now called North Carolina, was begun ten years before the granting of the charter, in 1663. Previous to 1653, the tract of country between the Roanoke and Chowan had been a place of refuge for the persecuted Quakers. Here, in 1653, Roger Greene and a colony of Virginians settled. In April, 1670, the first permanent settlement of South Carolina, by Europeans was begun.

This was the period when persecution was raging in Scotland. Charles II. was restored in 1660 and died in 1685. He was succeeded by James II. In 1688, James was driven from the throne of England, and the world was delivered from the ill-fated House of the Stuarts.

During all this long period of twenty-eight years, a cloud of gloomy darkness hung over the Church of Scotland. It was a reign of terror. Charles attempted to establish prelacy in Scotland, and James undertook to revive and establish papacy in England, Ireland and Scotland.

Every effort which human ingenuity could contrive, and diabolical malice plan, was resorted to, that the Presbyterian Church of Scotland might be subdued, humbled, corrupted and blotted out of existence.

Strange as it may appear, Charles II., while persecuting God's people at home, granted a charter to eight noblemen, who, in the language of the charter, were "excited with a laudable and pious zeal for the propagation of the Christian faith," to plant a colony in the wilds of America. This act was a glaring contradiction of the whole course of his life.

There can be no reasonable doubt that it was the design of Charles II. and those who obtained from him the charter to plant a colony in Carolina, to establish in that colony the Church of England. This was actually done, and the Church of England continued to be the legally established church of



both the Carolinas until the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, October 19, 1781, set the American people free from political and ecclesiastical hierarchies. Notwithstanding this fact, both the first and the second charter, and also the Fundamental Constitutions, drawn up by the celebrated John Locke, granted, in a limited sense, the right to dissenters from the Church of England to worship God in accordance with the dictates of their own consciences.

Such being the case, Carolina, at a very early period, became a place of refuge for those who, in various portions of the Old World, were persecuted on account of their religious belief and practice.

The first settlement made in South Carolina under the charter granted by Charles II. ante-dates the battle of Bothwell Bridge but nine years. That battle marks the beginning of the separate existence of the strict Presbyterians or Covenanters. Soon afterwards some of the Covenanters were banished to Jamaica and some to Carolina. A number of those banished to Jamaica, in a few years afterwards, made their way to Carolina. Some of them, prior to the year 1700, settled in the region of country in which the city of Savannah now stands. Some settled near Augusta, Georgia, and some of them found homes in the city of Charleston. These, in each succeeding year, were joined by emigrants from Scotland and Ireland. So that many years prior to the Revolutionary War, there were a few Covenanters in every settlement in the State of South Carolina, and in many of those in North Carolina. The causes which led them to dissent from the Church of Scotland having scarcely an existence in the Carolinas, their offspring, in many instances, sought connection with the Presbyterian Church. About the year 1750 their numbers, compared with the State population, became considerable in a few of the upper counties of South Carolina, and in the counties of Orange and Rowan, in North Carolina. They organized themselves into societies, and assembling together on the Sabbath, read the Bible, catechised the children, and, in America as they had done in Scotland, perpetuated their existence without the help of preachers or presbyteries.

Large numbers of Covenanters began to arrive in the country about the year 1770. In 1772, Rev. William Martin came



to America and began to preach to these scattered societies. His field of labor was very great, extending from Louisville, Georgia, on the south, to Statesville, North Carolina, on the north. In all the intervening territory there were a few Covenanters societies. In Georgia there were two, probably three; in South Carolina, perhaps as many as ten; and in North Carolina two—probably more.

It is probable that prior to the arrival of Mr. Martin the Covenanters had only a few houses of worship in the South. In some cases they were joint owners with the Presbyterians and Associates in houses of worship.

The early history of both the Associate and Covenanter congregations in the South is involved in great obscurity. One reason which may be assigned for this is the fact that in the early ecclesiastical histories of the South, these two denominations are either ignored, or classed with the Presbyterian Church. In none of the secular histories of either of the Carolinas, written before the Revolutionary war, or for some years afterward, is there any mention made of the Associate or Reformed Presbyterian Churches. If alluded to at all, it is under the general head of Presbyterians. Another reason why so little is known about the early history of these two branches of the church in the South, is that for a long period they had no settled pastors and no church courts. Previous to the Revolutionary war, so far as is positively known, there was no regularly-settled pastor in any of the Covenanter or Associate congregations, in either of the Carolinas or Georgia. There were, however, in the South several Covenanter and Associate ministers. William Martin, whose name was once familiar to every man, woman and child in the upper part of South Carolina, had his home on Rocky Creek, Chester county, South Carolina. John Renwick settled in Newberry county, South Carolina, in 1770. Thomas Beattie preached to the societies in Georgia, during the year 1774. William Ronaldson preached in Abbeville county, South Carolina, and in what are now Jefferson and Burke counties, Georgia, until 1780. When he came to America is unknown. None of these, however, were regularly installed pastors of any of the churches to which they ministered, nor were they organized into a presbytery.



About the year 1760, perhaps before this time, a petition was sent by some persons in Carolina to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania "for a supply of sermon." Who these petitioners were, or in which of the Carolinas they resided, even tradition does not inform us. There are several circumstances which make it probable that some of them lived in North Carolina, and some in South Carolina, and that they were scattered over the region of country extending from Long Cane, in Abbeville county, South Carolina, to points north of Statesville, North Carolina. There were, however, but few of them in any particular locality. It is not at all improbable that some of the Covenanters joined with them, in this petition. It is a fact that in Scotland, and especially in America, at this time, or rather a few years previous to this time, the Covenanters cherished a very fraternal feeling towards the Seceders.

At the meeting of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, on the 12th of October, 1762, "there was laid before them a petition from Hawfields, North Carolina." This is definite, in that it mentions a particular locality; but it is very indefinite, since "Hawfields" is the name not of a particular place, but of a region of country the bounds of which were never accurately defined. The Hawfields took their name from the abundance of hawthorns which grew in the region. For the same reason the stream which flows through the region is called Haw River. Tradition has handed down the aboriginal name of the river and the region through which it flows, as *Saxapahaw*, though it is also claimed by some writers that the Indians applied the same name to Cape Fear River, of which the Haw is an affluent. The Hawfields are in what was formerly Orange county, but now Alamance. All that we certainly know is, that this petition of October, 1762, to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, came from persons living in what is now Alamance county, North Carolina. A large portion of the inhabitants of the Hawfields were Scotch-Irish, who, on coming to America, first settled in Pennsylvania, and afterwards, about 1755, or a few years earlier, some of them removed to North Carolina. It was not, however, until 1763 that the petition from Carolina could be favorably considered. On the 30th of August, 1763, the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, appointed the Rev. James Proudfoot to spend



about two months in Carolina. He was to preach in that region the second, third and fourth Sabbaths in September, and the first, second and third Sabbaths in October. This appointment Mr. Proudfoot did not fill. The presbytery called upon him to give his reasons for not complying with its order. The reasons of Mr. Proudfoot having been stated, were regarded by the presbytery "as containing no weight in them." It was further ordered that Mr. Proudfoot "be admonished and the same appointment continued on him, to be fulfilled some time between the beginning of March and the end of May next." At this time, Mr. Proudfoot was appointed to preach four Sabbaths in Carolina. For some reason, which was satisfactory to the presbytery, he remained in Carolina only a part of the time specified in the appointment.

This missionary tour of Rev. James Proudfoot to Carolina was made sometime between the 25th of October, 1763, and the 15th of April, 1764. The appointment was made by the presbytery at its meeting at Muddy Creek, on the 25th of October, 1763, and Mr. Proudfoot made his report to the presbytery at its meeting at Oxford, on the 15th of April, 1764. So far as is known, there is no datum by which the visit of Mr. Proudfoot to Carolina can be more definitely fixed.

The particular localities visited by Mr. Proudfoot are not certainly known; but it is probable that they were in North Carolina and confined to the society or societies in the Hawfields, and those societies which afterward constituted in part the pastoral charge of Rev. John Boyse. The congregations in North Carolina of which Mr. Boyse was pastor, were Coddle Creek, Gilead and Prosperity. Of these Coddle Creek is certainly the oldest. In fact, Coddle Creek is in all probability the oldest Associate Reformed congregation in the South. There was in the region of country in which Coddle Creek church is located, the nucleus of an Associate congregation before 1760.

In 1755 Braddock was defeated. This exposed the inhabitants of Pennsylvania to the hostile attacks of the Indians. To escape the cruelties of the savages, many persons came to North Carolina and settled. By these refugees, mainly, Presbyterianism was introduced into the region of country between the Yadkin and Catawba rivers. It is probable that the larger



number of these settlers were in connection with the Presbyterian Church; but there were in the region of country in which Statesville is now situated several families in connection with the Associate Church, and a still greater number farther south, in Rowan county. These organized themselves into a society at a very early period, giving to the organization the name Caudle (now Coddle) Creek.

By these it is almost certain that the petition was sent, about 1760, to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania for "a supply of sermon."

From several facts, it seems that a number of petitions from Carolina were sent to the Presbytery in May, 1763, or that the services of more than one man were desired. This is the only reasonable construction which the following minute of the Presbytery will bear, viz: "The petition from Carolina is incompatible for them (the Presbytery) to answer at this time; but that one of their number to go out to that part of the world is all they agree upon." The meaning of this rather obscure minute seems to be that either several petitions from Carolina were received by the presbytery; or if only one, then more than "one of their number" was desired to labor among those sending the petition. It would seem from the above minute that some one was sent to preach to the vacancies in Carolina; but no mention is made of his name, nor have we any means of ascertaining whether he obeyed the order of presbytery or not. The presbytery met again on the 30th of August, and Rev. James Proudfoot was appointed to preach in Carolina on the second, third and fourth Sabbaths in September, and on the first, second and third Sabbaths in October. The presbytery met again on the 25th of October, and there was presented "a petition from Carolina for *further* supplies." From this it would seem that they had received some supplies; but that they were anxious to obtain more, or that some other societies in Carolina desired supplies.

It was at this meeting of the presbytery that Mr. Proudfoot was admonished to be faithful, and again appointed to go to Carolina.

When we take into consideration the fact that one hundred and twenty years ago there were no mail facilities by which the petition of the people of Carolina could be conveyed to the As-



sociate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, we are forced to conclude that the petition was carried by individuals in connection with the society sending it up. It will also be remembered that the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania was organized on the 2d of November, 1753; consequently, the petitions for "supply of sermon" were sent up to it from Carolina in less than ten years after its organization. The only possible way by which a knowledge of the existence of such an organization as the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania could be obtained by the people of Carolina was through emigrants from Pennsylvania. Newspapers had at that time no circulation in any part of northern South Carolina or western North Carolina. There were no railroads, no stage lines, and few if any post offices outside of the seaport towns. All the facts and circumstances in the case seem to indicate that there were more than one petition, and that Coddle Creek was one of the localities from which emanated the first petitions from Carolina to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania for "a supply of sermon." This is rendered highly probable, from the fact that many of the first settlers of the Coddle Creek section of North Carolina came from the region of country in which General Braddock was defeated.

It is probable that Mr. Proudfoot extended his labors as far south as the counties of Chester and Fairfield, South Carolina. This, however, is only a conjecture based upon the fact that his name was more familiar to the first generation of Seceders in those counties, and held in greater esteem by them than any of the first Seceder ministers who came to America.

As we advance, the darkness which envelops the early history of the Associate Church in the South begins to dissipate, and beams of light begin to fall upon us. At the meeting of the presbytery at Oxford, on the 13th of April, 1764, "two petitions, one from Catawba River, Mecklenburgh county, North Carolina (now Hopewell Presbyterian Church), and another from Hawfields, were read; but no mention is made of any one having been sent to preach to the petitioners. The demands made upon the presbytery were so many that only a few could be met, and these only in part. The fields cultivated were those contiguous to the laborers. The more distant were, for the time, practically abandoned.



On the 15th of August, 1764, the Associate Presbytery met at Marsh Creek, Pennsylvania. At this meeting, "the petitions from Carolina (those previously sent) came under consideration." Rev. Robert Annan "was unanimously appointed to set out thither immediately after the first Sabbath of September next, to be three Sabbaths at the Hawfields, and two at Sugaw Creek." This appointment Mr. Annan fulfilled.

Sugaw Creek, usually called at the present time Sugar Creek, is only about three miles, in a north-eastern direction, from the city of Charlotte, N. C. In this region of country, sometime between 1755 and 1758, Rev. Alexander Craighead began to preach. Some time in the month of September, 1758, he was installed pastor of Rocky River Church. What is now Sugar, or correctly, Sugaw, Creek Church, was part of Rocky River congregation. Rev. Alexander Craighead was nominally in connection with the Presbyterian Church, and in this connection he died; but it was only a nominal connection. In sympathy he was inclined to both the Covenanters and the Seceders. Of this there can be no doubt. In fact, from about the year 1742, or perhaps from 1741 to 1753, a period of about ten years, he was not in regular connection with the Presbyterian Church, although resting under no ecclesiastical censure. During a part of this time he coöperated with the Reformed Presbyterians or Covenanters. It is probable that he never was regularly received into the Reformed Presbyterian Church, but it is certain that he regarded himself a Covenanter, and was so regarded by the Covenanter Societies. At the general meeting of the Covenanter Societies which met at Middle Octoraro, March 4, 1744, Mr. Craighead was chosen president or chairman of the meeting. Not only so, but the congregation or congregations to which he regularly preached was called the Craighead Society. In 1751, for some reason, not now fully known, he made application to the Anti-Burgher Synod of Scotland for ministerial assistance; but for some reason no ministers were sent to his aid. About 1753 he returned to the Presbyterian Church, but he ever cherished for the Covenanters and Associates a tender regard, and so did they for him.

It is more than probable that Mr. Craighead was, in some way or other, connected with the petition addressed to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania from Sugaw Creek.



In May, 1765, petitions were received by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania from the Hawfields and Buffalo, in North Carolina, jointly craving, according to the obsolete but expressive language of the times, "a supply of sermon;" but nothing is stated by which we are enabled to learn whether these petitions were granted or not. In November, 1766, a petition was received by the Associate Presbytery from Craven county, North Carolina. The following is the minute of the presbytery respecting this petition :

The petition from Craven county, in North Carolina, came first under consideration, concerning which it was agreed that Mr. Annan write to them a short detail of our principles, with difference between us and other denominations of Presbyterians in America, and upon their acquiescing in them, to give them to hope that supplies will be endeavored to be sent thither.

It is evident from this extract that the persons in Craven county, North Carolina, who petitioned the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania for supplies were not in connection with the Associate Church. It is barely possible that some of them were Covenanters, but it is very probable that they all, or nearly all, were in connection with the Presbyterian Church. No doubt this was the case in respect to several other places which sent up petitions. Why they were dissatisfied with the Presbyterian Church we need not inquire, only in part. All that we need know is that many of the more rigid Scotch-Irish Presbyterians regarded the American Presbyterian Church as objectionable in some particulars. No doubt the latitudinarian notions which were beginning to be entertained by some of the Presbyterian ministers constituted the principal objection. So far as is known, no Associate congregation was ever organized in Craven county; neither was any organized at several other points in North Carolina to which supplies of preaching were occasionally sent. If there is anything that the Seceders are free from, it is proselyting. With them it has ever been a matter of conscience to receive individuals from other Christian denominations only on certificate. In addition to this, there is on the statute books of the church an unrepealed law to the effect that no countenance will be shown to ecclesiastical "tramps."

In November, 1767, the people of the Hawfields, in North Carolina, again petitioned for supplies, but none were granted them. During the early part of the year 1768, no petitions



were sent from the societies in the South to the presbytery ; but in November of that year a petition from North Carolina was received. To this petition the presbytery replied by directing Rev. Thomas Clark to write to the petitioners, "advising them to collect some money and send to Scotland for a minister." Nothing more was heard from the societies in the South until November, 1769, when another petition was presented from Rowan county, North Carolina. The following is the action of the presbytery in reference to this petition :

That Mr. Clark set out for Carolina, to continue three months and dispense gospel ordinances only in the following places: One Sabbath at Deep Run; three Sabbaths at Hawfields; three in Rowan county; three Sabbaths at Waxhaws; and three at Sugaw Creek, and that Mr. Clark encourage the people to apply only to the synod unto which this presbytery is subordinate, for ministers for themselves.

These appointments Mr. Clark filled some time between the 1st of May, 1770, and the 6th of November of the same year. This is inferred from the fact that he was given appointments in Pennsylvania until the end of April, and he was present at the meeting of the presbytery at Oxford on the 6th of November.

In August, 1771, some people in Mecklenburgh county, North Carolina, again petitioned for preaching ; but as it was impossible for the presbytery to grant the request of the petitioners, Rev. Messrs. Henderson, Rodgers and Smith were appointed to write to the people of Mecklenburgh, "advising them to write home to Scotland for a minister."

During the years 1772 and 1773, petitions for supplies were received by the presbytery from persons residing in North Carolina ; but all that could be done by the presbytery was to write to them, advising them as they had done before, "to write home to Scotland for a minister."

The presbytery did not, however, forget the people of North Carolina. Mr. Rodgers, pastor of Timber Ridge and connections in Virginia, was sent to North Carolina in the fall of 1774. He preached, probably, in the Hawfields, and to the societies in Rowan county, the first, second, third and fourth Sabbaths of September, and the first Sabbath of October.

In October, 1744, the Associate Presbytery met at New York. At this meeting three petitions were received from North Carolina. One was from the Hawfields. The other two were



from places which, so far as the records show, had never before sent up petitions to the Associate Presbytery. One of these was from Eno, or, following the orthography of the record, "Ennoe," and the other was from New Hope, Tyron county, North Carolina. Both these places were in the south-eastern corner of what is now Gaston county, North Carolina, near the Catawba river. In 1774, all that part of North Carolina west of the Catawba River, together with what now constitutes several of the upper counties of South Carolina, was known as Tryon county. When, then, it is said that petitions came from Tryon county, it may mean either from North Carolina or South Carolina. So far, however, as we have been able to discover, no petition from South Carolina was ever sent to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania. This is accounted for by the fact that the members of the Associate Church, who settled in South Carolina, with the exception of those in Long Cane and Cedar Spring, generally came directly from Ireland and Scotland, and not by way of Pennsylvania, and consequently knew nothing of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania.

At the meeting of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania at Pequea, Pa., on August 1st, 1775, petitions "craving a supply of sermon were presented from the counties of Mecklenburgh, Tryon and Rowan, in North Carolina."

The petition from Rowan, we feel satisfied, came from Coddle Creek and connections; that from Mecklenburgh, from Steele Creek and Waxhaws; and that from Tryon, from Eno and New Hope, and an Associate congregation or society a short distance south of Lincolnton, called Goshen, and from which was formed in part what is at present Pisgah, in Gaston county, N. C. The first settlers of the region of country in which Pisgah is situated were Scotch-Irish, who first settled near Gettysburg, Pa. From that point they came to what was then Tryon county. In answer to the petitions above mentioned, the following action was taken by the presbytery: "Mr. Martin preach at Raphoe, 1st Sabbath of August; at Hanover, 2d Sabbath of August; at Raphoe, 3d Sabbath of August; at Conewago, 4th Sabbath of August; at Marsh Creek, on the 1st and 2d Sabbaths of September; at Staunton, Va., 3d Sabbath of September, and thenceforward to the next meeting supply in the different places in North Carolina where there are petitions from, and longer if he finds it necessary."



Since Mr. Martin certainly came to North Carolina, and as there is no evidence to the contrary, it is taken for granted that he obeyed the order of the presbytery to the very letter. In October, 1776, Mr. Martin received a call from Fourth Creek, in North Carolina. By Fourth Creek is meant what was once the Presbyterian Church of that name, but is now known as the Presbyterian Church of Statesville, N. C. This call the presbytery refused to sustain, because of the inadequacy of the support promised.

It is evident, from a variety of facts, that tradition has not been careful in distinguishing the two Martins who labored among the Associate and Covenanter vacancies in the Carolinas. James Martin, the Associate minister, is by tradition, almost entirely ignored.

In 1777, the Rev. Andrew Patton was sent to North Carolina. For some time he preached in Mecklenburgh and adjoining counties, and afterwards went to the city of Charleston, S. C. Of his labors in that city nothing is certainly known. He was very soon charged with gross immorality, and the probability is, he did the cause which he was sent out to advance a real injury.

In the fall of 1779, Rev. Thomas Clark preached to some of the Associate congregations or societies in North Carolina, when on his way to visit, by order of presbytery, that part of his congregation which settled in Abbeville county, South Carolina.

In 1767, a considerable portion of an Anti-Burgher congregation came to America. They settled in what is now Newberry county, South Carolina. In 1770, they were joined by their pastor, Rev. John Renwick, and another portion of the congregation. In this region of the country Mr. Renwick continued to labor until the 20th of August, 1775, when he died. The societies to which Mr. Renwick principally ministered, were those out of which grew the churches, Cannon Creek, Head Spring and Prosperity.

It is probable that from the fall of 1779 to the summer of 1782, there was no Associate minister in the South, in good and regular standing, except a Mr. Ronaldson, of whom nothing is known, except that he sympathized with the British government, and for this offense was forced to leave Long



Cane congregation, to which he was preaching, probably as stated supply. He went to Georgia and became the pastor, or probably only stated supply, of some congregations occupying the territory in which Louisville is now situated; but his tory notions, or rather loyalty to the British government, becoming known to the people, "his pastoral relations were," it is said, "violently dissolved," which means, no doubt, the people drove him away.

The war between the colonies and the mother country was now absorbing the attention of all classes in society. Several of the Associate preachers were chaplains in the American army during the war, and the Associates and the Covenanters, to a man, espoused the cause of the colonies. Such being the condition of the country, the Associate societies in the South were temporarily abandoned.

In the region of country between the Catawba and Broad rivers, the old Covenanter, William Martin, continued to preach both the gospel and resistance against the British government, until he was taken prisoner by the tories and British, in the beginning of the summer of 1780.

There were, however, during all this period, several preachers who claimed to be ministers of the Associate Church. Of these men scarcely anything except their names is known, and even these, in some instances, have been forgotten. The tradition is that they had been deposed, on account of immoral conduct—generally drunkenness and fornication. Writhing, probably, under disgrace, they came to America, and attempted to thrust themselves upon the people. In no instance were they successful in this among the Associate people, and so far as is known, their conduct became very immoral, and they sunk into open profligacy.

In the spring of 1782, Rev. Thomas Clark was, at his own request, released from the pastoral care of Salem congregation, in New York. Soon afterward he repaired to Abbeville county, South Carolina, and spent the remainder of the year 1782, and the greater part of the year 1783, in laboring in the congregations of Long Cane, Little Run and Cedar Creek. The majority of the members of these three congregations had been in connection with the church of which Mr. Clark was pastor in Ireland. Some time during the latter part of the



summer of 1783 he returned North, identified himself with the Associate Reformed Church, and was elected Moderator of the Synod. The following two years he labored as a missionary among the Associate Reformed Churches in the North.

In November, 1783, Rev. John Jamieson, a native of Scotland and member of the Burgher Synod, came to America and immediately joined the Associate Reformed Church. For a period of nearly twelve months he ministered mainly in the South. In May, 1785, Mr. Jamieson reported to the Associate Reformed Synod that "a number of people in and about Mecklenburgh and Rowan counties, North Carolina, and Rocky Creek, Cannon's Creek and Long Cane, in South Carolina; who are destitute of a settled ministry, desire to be taken under the judicial care of this Synod." On hearing this report, the Synod—

*Resolved*, That the desire of these people be complied with, and that the Second Presbytery be directed to take them under their immediate charge, and that Mr. Clark and Houleston be appointed to supply the people in North and South Carolina as soon in the fall as practicable.

Mr. Clark came South sometime during the latter part of the year 1785, and began to labor permanently in Abbeville county, South Carolina. Mr. Adam Houleston died in March, 1786, without, it is supposed, having been able to fill the appointment of Synod.

For a period of about five years, the congregations at present forming the First and Second Presbyteries of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South were in connection with the Second Presbytery of Pennsylvania. In 1785, Rev. John Rodgers settled as pastor of Timber Ridge and Old Providence, Virginia. These congregations also were under the care of the Second Presbytery of Pennsylvania.

On the 31st of May, 1786, the Associate Reformed Synod met in the city of Philadelphia, Pa. On the next day (June 1st), a call to Rev. Thomas Clark, with a petition from the united congregations of Little Run, Long Cane and Cedar Creek, "to admit the said Mr. Clark to the pastoral charge of the said congregations" was read.

Mr. Clark was at time in South Carolina, laboring among the people, petitioning for his settlement as their pastor. The synod directed that he continue to labor among them till provision be made for his regular installment.



So far as is certainly known, Mr. Clark was never formally installed over Cedar Spring (called Cedar Creek formerly), and Long Cane. If it could be proved that he never was installed pastor of these congregations there would have been nothing irregular in the matter. He was regularly installed as pastor of Ballybay, Ireland, and he as pastor and the people as members of Ballybay congregation came to America. Mr. John Renwick certainly was pastor of Cannon Creek and Indian Creek, but he never was installed over that people. The oldest pastorate in any of the Seceder churches in the Carolinas or Georgia is certainly that of John Renwick, in Newberry. The next is that of Thomas Clark, in Cedar Spring and Long Cane.

It is worthy of mention in this place that none of the territory south of the James River was, previous to 1785, included within the limits of any Associate Reformed presbytery. In the region of country extending from Lynchburg, Virginia, to a point many miles south of Louisville, Georgia, there were a number of societies of the Associate and Covenanter faith. Some were Burghers, some were Anti-Burghers, and some were Covenanters. In relative strength, the Anti-Burghers and Covenanters were about equal, while the Burghers were generally few in number, except in Long Cane and Cedar Spring congregations, where they were decidedly in the majority. The tract of country occupied by these scattered societies was fully four hundred miles long and about fifty wide. In this tract of country there were, as early as 1785, at least forty societies of Seceders, and perhaps half that number of Covenanters. Many of these consisted of only a few families. The whole number of Covenanters and Seceders in connection with these societies were not more, perhaps, than fifteen hundred or two thousand.

Some of these societies had, previous to the Revolutionary war, houses of worship; but the probability is that the majority of them worshipped in private houses in the winter, and in the summer under the shade of the forest.

Quite a number of these weak societies despairing, perhaps, of ever being able to secure organizations of their own faith and order, united with Presbyterian congregations. Some of these, in after years, became dissatisfied and returned to the church of their fathers; but the majority remained.



Some time during the early part of the summer of 1788, Rev. John Boyse began to preach in the congregations of Coddle Creek, in North Carolina, and in Rocky Creek, South Carolina. His ecclesiastical connection was with the Associate Reformed Presbytery of Pennsylvania. By this presbytery he was licensed, in the autumn of 1787, and ordained in the summer of 1789. Immediately after being licensed, Mr. Boyse came South and began to preach to two congregations, the members of which were scattered over a tract of country more than one hundred miles long, and fully twenty miles wide.

It may not be out of place to remark that during the pastorate of Mr. Boyse, it was no uncommon thing for individuals to go a distance of thirty miles to church. The members of Hopewell congregation were scattered all over the counties of Chester and Fairfield, and several families (the Roddeys and Galloways) lived in York county.

The Associate Presbyterians and Covenanters in the South had very little, if anything at all to do in effecting the union which resulted in the organization of the Associate Reformed Church. They had, no doubt, learned through Rev. Thomas Clark that negotiations having a union in view were in progress between the Associate and Reformed Presbyterians. To the majority of the Burghers and Anti-Burghers in the South, the union was agreeable, and they readily entered the Associate Reformed Church. A few of the Covenanters in the South went into the union church; but the majority held themselves aloof from it. They kept up their society meetings and maintained their existence for a period of eight or ten years without the aid of a minister. In 1790, they were visited by Rev. James Reid, a missionary sent out by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Mr. Reid returned in the summer of 1790. In 1791, Rev. Mr. McGarragh was sent to South Carolina, and in 1792, he was joined by Rev. William King. Thomas Donnelly, a graduate of Glasgow, Scotland, began the study of theology under Mr. King. He was licensed in 1799, and ordained in 1801.

For a few years, during the close of the last century and beginning of the present, a number of Covenanter congregations were organized in the South, and pastors settled over them. So far as is known, these were all in South Carolina, and nearly



all in Chester county. As early as the year 1800, the people in connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church began to emigrate from the South. About that time a number of families residing in York county, South Carolina, went to Pennsylvania. Those who first left the South and went North were induced to take the step mainly on account of the prospective increase of slavery. Soon after the close of the Revolutionary war the number of negro slaves began to increase rapidly in the upper counties of South Carolina. These were the counties in which were settled by far the greater number of the Covenanters. The institution was at first unpopular with the better class of citizens in every section of the State of South Carolina, and for a time it was forbidden by law in Georgia. During colonial times England forbid every restriction on the slave trade. South Carolina became alarmed on account of the increase of the negro slaves, and in 1760 attempted to restrict the number of negro slaves brought upon her soil. For this philanthropic effort she received nothing save the rebuke of the English government.

Prior to the Revolutionary war, there were only a few negro slaves in any of the upper counties of South Carolina, or the western counties of North Carolina. The few that were in the regions designated had been generally brought by their masters from Virginia. The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians at first regarded the institution with horror. Gradually, they became accustomed to it, and in the course of less than half a century, all or nearly all, became its practical supporters.

It is probable that at the time of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis there were not one hundred negroes owned by all the members of the Seceder and Covenanter churches in the South. As early as the beginning of the present century, a few of both these branches of the church purchased slaves; but in 1800 the body of both Seceders and Covenanters in the South were decidedly opposed to slavery. With the annual growth of slavery, the annual emigration of the Covenanters increased. Some of those who had become owners of negroes manumitted them, while others who had less conscientious scruples on the subject of slavery, or having a greater thirst for gold, sold their slaves and invested the money in the rich lands of the northwest.



There were, at various times since the organization of the Associate Reformed Church, about a dozen of Covenanter ministers who settled and labored as pastors in South Carolina. The field of their labors was mainly included by the counties of Fairfield, Chester, Newberry and York. They are all gone. The dust of four of these faithful ministers of the New Testament sleeps in the old Brick Church grave yard on Rocky creek, in Chester county, South Carolina. The last Covenanter minister who settled in South Carolina was Thomas Donnelly. He finished his earthly labors on the 28th of November, 1847. All the Covenanters are gone from the South. The greater part emigrated to the north-western states, and the rest are all dead. Their children and grandchildren, who remained in the South, are generally members of the Associate Reformed Church. Some, however, are found in the Presbyterian Church, and a few in the Methodist.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

FACTS OF THE LAST CHAPTER—Petitions to the Presbyterian Church—Presbyterian Missionaries—The Conclusion Likely to be Reached—First Presbyterian Minister Sent to North Carolina—Presbyterian Settlers of North Carolina—Cape Fear Settlers—Scotch Settlers of 1746-47—Their History—Battle of Culloden—Duke of Cumberland—George II.—The Scotch and the Pretender—Conditions on which the Prisoners were Pardoned—Bladen County Settlement—Other Scotch and Scotch-Irish Settlements—The Harmony of the Presbyterians, Associates and Covenanters in North Carolina—Effects of the Difficulties with England—The Lay Members of the Church of Scotland Always Friendly—Soundness in the Faith—In What it Consisted—Introduction of Watts' Imitation of the Psalms—Its Effects—The Scotch-Irish of North Carolina—Two Classes of Scotch-Irish—Their Origin and Difference—The Frequency of Petitions from Virginia and North Carolina—The Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania—From Whom These Petitions Came—Not Presbyterians—Associates in Virginia—Their Location—Coalesce with the Presbyterian Church.

The facts respecting the early history of the Associate Church in Carolina, narrated in the preceding chapter, deserve more than a simple statement. They were gathered almost entirely from the manuscript minutes of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and from the manuscript minutes of the original Associate Reformed Synod. These two documents, taken together, cover a period of nearly half a century, and contain the whole of the history of the Associate and Associate Reformed denominations during their infancy. So far as facts are concerned, they are reliable.

Those who are familiar with the documentary history of the Presbyterian Church cannot but be impressed with the great similarity in the facts recorded in the minutes of the Presbyterian Church courts in reference to petitions from North Carolina and those facts mentioned in the last chapter. From nearly all the places in Carolina sending up petitions to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, petitions were sent to the ecclesiastical courts of the Presbyterian Church. Ministers in connection with the Presbyterian Church preached at the Hawfields, at Coddle Creek, at Sugaw Creek, at New Hope, at



Eno and at Goshen, probably before Proudfoot, Annan, Mason, Martin, Patten, Rodgers and Clark, and certainly during the time they were preaching at these places.

To the general reader this no doubt appears strange, and without an explanation he is ready to come to an erroneous conclusion. Is it possible that these petitioners from North Carolina were ecclesiastical coquettes? Had they buried the Westminster Confession of Faith, discarded all creed and confessions, broken down all denominational barriers, and reached that point in ecclesiastical decline when they could unite with any party? An imperfect knowledge of the facts and circumstances in their case might lead to such a conclusion, but it would be grossly erroneous.

So far as is certainly known, the first Presbyterian clergyman who preached in North Carolina was Rev. William Robinson. He spent the winter of 1742-43 in missionating in the region of country east of Yadkin river, extending his labors as far as the Pedee, in South Carolina.

Previous to the visit of Mr. Robinson there were, in various sections of the State of North Carolina, a considerable number of Scotch and Scotch-Irish settlers. These were all Presbyterians, either by profession or by education. Previous to 1729 there were a few Scotch settled on the Cape Fear River. These were all Covenanters who had fled from great tribulation in their native land, and come to the wilds of America, that they might be permitted to worship God in peace and quiet. In 1746 and 1747, a very large number of Scotch came to North Carolina and settled in old Bladen county. The history of these people is touchingly interesting. It might be written in tears.

On the 16th of April, 1746, was fought the battle of Culloden. The English forces, under the Duke of Cumberland, were victorious, and the fortunes of Charles Edward Stuart, the young Pretender, were ruined, and his hopes of empire forever crushed. Many of the Scotch, forgetting that the Stuarts were Catholics and the Scotch Protestants, and for the moment remembering only that the Stuarts were Scotch, espoused not the cause of the Pretender, but the Pretender himself.

They made a sad mistake. We may pity them, but we dare not censure them. Their love for their country was genuine, but too strong.



Those sections of Scotland which had declared for the Pretender were, by the conqueror, swept with the besom of destruction. This done, the Duke of Cumberland returned to London to be honored as a conqueror and ever afterward despised for his brutality towards the conquered. The Duke intended to put all the prisoners to death. The King, however, was more merciful, and proposed to pardon a large number upon condition that they would take the oath of allegiance to the House of Hanover, and then emigrate to the American plantations.

The condition was accepted, and during the years 1746 and 1747 several ship loads of these generous and brave, but ill-advised and unfortunate people, landed in the region of country embraced by the counties of North Carolina watered by the Cape Fear and Little Pedee Rivers. To these people the Rev. James Campbell, a native of Scotland, began to preach in 1757. This settlement, in old Bladen county, is the oldest Presbyterian settlement in North Carolina, and James Campbell was the first ordained Presbyterian minister who settled in the State.

Several years previous to the defeat of General Braddock, many Scotch-Irish Presbyterian families had emigrated from Pennsylvania and Virginia and settled in the region of North Carolina, from which were addressed petitions both to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, and to the synods and presbyteries in connection with the Presbyterian Church.

The people sending up these petitions were all Presbyterians of the Scotch or Scotch-Irish type. According to a nomenclature devised by themselves, and by common consent adopted, they were known and recognized as Presbyterians, Associates or Seceders, and Reformed Presbyterians or Covenanters.

Numerically, it is probable the Presbyterians were the strongest, and the Covenanters the weakest. The difference in numbers in some sections of the country, between the Associates and the Presbyterians was scarcely perceptible. The peculiar circumstances by which these people, in common with the people of the whole country, were surrounded, had much to do in causing them to forget those peculiar differences which rent into fragments the Church of Scotland, the mother of them all.



In North Carolina there were no patrons ; neither were there any burgess oaths or patronage laws. They all loved the Church of Scotland. Properly speaking, none of them had seceded from it, and for it they all had suffered much, and were willing, if necessary, to suffer more.

As time rolled on and events developed, fraternal love was increased. By whatever different names they had been called, and whatever were their former prejudices, they were now brethren. Presbyterians, Seceders and Covenanters were willing to worship God under the same roof, and hear the same man preach. In addition to the above, it may be added that however violent some of the ministers of the different branches of the Church of Scotland may have been in their opposition to each other, the strict lay members of the Church of Scotland were ever the warm friends of both the Seceders and Covenanters, and for the Church of Scotland, pure and uncorrupted, neither Seceders nor Covenanters ever lost any of their first love.

Such being the case, it was customary for Presbyterians, Seceders and Covenanters, in various sections of America, to unite in applications to the different church courts, for, as it was then said, "a supply of sermon."

In these North Carolina Societies, as in some of those in South Carolina, the people were not particular whether the preacher was in connection with the Presbyterian Church, with the Associate Church, or with the Covenanters. They were, however, particular that he be a Presbyterian and sound in the faith ; which meant that he was ready and willing to subscribe to the doctrines contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter.

The Presbyterian Church, by allowing the use of Watts' version or "imitation" of the Psalms, perpetuated the Associate Reformed Church in the South. Had this not been done, it is almost certain that after the Revolutionary War, the two denominations would have, in at least the majority of cases, coalesced.

It is also probable that had the Associate Reformed Church been able to supply the people with the ordinances of God's house, a considerable number of Presbyterian congregations would have withdrawn and united with the Associate Re-



formed Church when the change was made in psalmody. As it was, parts of several congregations did withdraw and organize Associate Reformed congregations.

In doctrine and form of worship, all the branches of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina, prior to the change in psalmody, were identical. Such was not the case in the States farther north. This is accounted for, in part, at least, by the fact that the Presbyterian settlers of western North Carolina were the descendants of those who fled from Scotland to Ireland during the period which immediately preceded the reign of William of Orange. They are known in history as Scotch-Irish—a name which is, as near as can be, a synonym of Presbyterian.

Between the descendants of the Scotch who emigrated to Ireland during the reigns of James I. and his successor, and the descendants of those who emigrated during the reigns of Charles II. and James II., there was a marked difference. Both were appropriately called Scotch-Irish; but in the former a residence of fully three-quarters of a century in the Emerald Isle had produced great changes. They had lost much of the Scotch type of Presbyterianism. They exhibited a fair example of Irish Presbyterianism, which, so far as purity of doctrine and rigidity in Scriptural modes of worship are concerned, was next of kin to Scotch Presbyterianism.

For a period of about twenty years, or from 1762 to 1779, petitions were sent to the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania by persons living in parts of Virginia and North Carolina for “a supply of sermon.” The Presbytery often met six times, and never less than four times, annually. With only a few exceptions, petitions “for a supply of sermon” were read at every meeting, either from Virginia or North Carolina. At the same meeting there were frequently read petitions from four or five counties in Virginia, and from as many in North Carolina.

It is scarcely possible that the persons sending up these petitions were all members of the Presbyterian Church. Had this been the case, these petitions would have in all probability been answered, as was the petition from some persons in Craven county, North Carolina. Some members of the Presbytery would have been appointed, as was done in that case, to write



to the petitioners, giving them a clear statement of the particulars in which the Associate Presbytery differed from other Presbyterians in America, and promising to send them supplies if they would agree to acquiesce with the Presbytery. This was not done, except in the case of the petition from Craven county. Consequently, we may safely conclude that the petitions came from adherents to the Associate Presbyterian Church. Such being the case, we are warranted in concluding that in that portion of Virginia, west of the Blue Ridge, there were certainly, as early as 1762—perhaps several years prior to this—a number of congregations or societies in connection with the Associate Church. They were not all confined to this region. Petitions were sent to the Presbytery from Westmoreland county, and from the “mouth of the James River.” Prior to the Revolutionary war, a number of these societies had houses of worship, but how many cannot now be correctly ascertained.

All of these Associate congregations in Virginia, except about half a dozen, gradually coalesced with the Presbyterian Church. Here and there, at long intervals, may be found in what is West Virginia, a few old persons unknown to history, who still cherish for the church of their youth an ardent attachment. The old houses of worship have gone to decay, and except in a few instances, their very sites have been forgotten.



## CHAPTER XIX.

EMIGRATION, AFTER THE WAR, FROM IRELAND—The Old Irish Volunteer—Emigrants from the Churches of Ballynahinch, Killeleagh and Aho-ghil—Their Certificates—Emigrants Settle in South Carolina—Rev. Peter McMullan Comes to America—David Bothwell and James Rogers Land at Charleston, December 25, 1789—Bothwell Goes to Queenstown, Rogers to Fairfield—Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia Constituted—Members Present—Congregations Under Its Supervision—Their Names—Dr. Clark Clothes Himself in Canonical Robes—Number of Communicants—Burghers and Anti-Burghers Coalesce—Covenanters Stand Aloof—Character of the Congregations—Dr. Clark Dies—Rogers Ordained and Installed—Blackstock Arrives—Boyse Dies—McMullan Settles at Due West, Blackstock at Neely's Creek—John Hemphill Settles at Hopewell, and McKnight at Coddle Creek—Dixon Settles at King's Mountain, Turkey Creek and Bullock's Creek—Alexander Porter Settles in Dr. Clark's Old Charge—Charges Brought Against Mr. McMullan—McMullan Suspended—Division of the Presbytery—Broad River the Dividing Line—James McGill Licensed—David Bothwell Dies, 1801—Mr. McMullan Restored at Sharon—Nature of Mr. McMullan's Difficulty—Messrs. McMullan and Dixon Decline the Authority of the Associate Reformed Church—Apply to the Associate Church—Organized into a Presbytery, 1803—Members of the Presbytery—The McMullan-Dixon Controversy.

Almost immediately after the close of the Revolutionary war, the tide of immigration began to pour the distressed and oppressed inhabitants of every government of Europe into free America. Many Protestants of Ireland, sick at heart on account of grievances, both political and ecclesiastical, left the bogs of Derry and Antrim, crossed the Atlantic and sat down in poverty, but glad at heart in the wild woods of the Sunny South. Many and potent were the reasons which induced the Seceders of Ireland to leave their native land and seek on the western side of the Atlantic a home. Upon many of them poverty pressed like a millstone, and derision pointed at them the finger of scorn and contempt. Panting for liberty, they left the land whose sea-beaten shores they loved, but whose hardships they could no longer endure.

In the winter of 1788-89, several hundred Seceders left Ireland and came to South Carolina. They sailed in the *Old Irish Volunteer*, and landed in the city of Charleston about the last



of January or first of February, 1789. From this point they sought homes in different sections of the State. A few went to join their relations in Williamsburg county. For the greater number the counties of Lancaster, Chester and Fairfield had special attractions. Some of them found homes in York; a few settled in Lincoln county, North Carolina, and the remainder joined friends and relatives in Abbeville county, South Carolina. They brought certificates from the Church Sessions of Ballynahinch, Killeleagh and Ahoghil. Two of these certificates—possibly more—are still preserved.

On the 23d of May, 1789, the First Presbytery of Pennsylvania reported to the Associate Reformed Synod that they had licensed Mr. John Boyse to preach the gospel, and that he had received a call from the united congregations of Coddle Creek, in North Carolina, and Rocky Creek, in South Carolina, which he had accepted. From this it seems that the original name of Hopewell, in Chester county, South Carolina, was Rocky Creek, and that Gilead and Prosperity were afterward added to the pastoral charge of Mr. Boyse. At the same time it was reported that Mr. Boyse had received and accepted the call from Coddle Creek and Rocky Creek (now Hopewell), "a petition was read from Union congregation on Fishing Creek, praying for the settlement of a gospel minister among them." At the meeting of the Synod, in May, 1790, the Presbytery of Pennsylvania reported that "they had on the first of July, 1789, ordained Mr. John Boyse as pastor of the united congregations of Coddle Creek, in North Carolina, and Rocky Creek, in South Carolina." This is further evidence that the congregations of Gilead and Prosperity were not at first included in the pastoral charge of Mr. Boyse, and that the original name of Hopewell was Rocky Creek.

It may not be out of place to remark, in this connection, that about the time of which we are speaking, the names of congregations were, in many instances, changed. Rocky Creek Meeting House became Union; Little Run became Little River; and Cedar Creek was changed to the present Cedar Spring.

From the minutes, it appears that in 1787, a call was presented to Rev. John Jamieson from the congregations of Coddle Creek and Hopewell, in North Carolina. Without some explanation, the reader might be led to suppose that the Hope-



well here mentioned was the Hopewell in Chester county, South Carolina. Such, however, is not the case. Previous to the settlement of Mr. Hemphill, there was no such a place as Hopewell, the name of the church being Rocky Creek. The Hopewell, which in conjunction with Coddle Creek, presented in 1787 a call to the Rev. John Jamieson, was the Presbyterian church which still bears that name. It is situated in Mecklenburgh county, North Carolina, west from Davidson College about ten miles, and about two miles east from the Catawba river. Mr. Jamieson was at that time pastor of Big Spring congregation, in Pennsylvania, and "had no inclination to move." Hence the call from Coddle Creek and Hopewell, North Carolina was not accepted.

At this time, 1789, there were, in all the territory south of the James river, only two Associate Reformed ministers—Rev. Thomas Clark, pastor of Cedar Creek, Little Run and Long Cane; and Rev. John Boyse, stated supply and pastor-elect of Rocky Creek, in South Carolina, and of Coddle Creek, in North Carolina.

Some time during the year 1789, the Rev. Peter McMullan, pastor of the Anti-Burgher congregation of Ahoghil, Ireland, came to America. During the succeeding autumn and winter he missionated among the churches within the bounds of what is now the First Presbytery.

On the 25th of December, 1789, Rev. David Bothwell, an ordained minister, and James Rogers, a licentiate, landed in the city of Charleston, South Carolina. David Bothwell was sent to America in answer to a petition addressed by the Seceders in the vicinity of Queensborough, Georgia, to the Presbytery of Monaghan, Ireland. It is probable that David Bothwell set out, immediately on landing at Charleston, for Queensborough. James Rogers says, in his autobiography: "I remained two weeks in Charleston, at Alexander Robinson's, and then went into the back county of Fairfield, where my uncle, James Gray, resided." Having remained a few Sabbaths in Fairfield, he went to Long Cane. Here, on the 24th of February, 1790, the PRESBYTERY OF THE CAROLINAS AND GEORGIA was organized. The following is the ecclesiastical procedure in reference to the formation of the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia:



At the meeting of the Associate Reformed Synod at Philadelphia, on the 20th of May, 1789, a letter was received from Rev. Thomas Clark, in which he reported that he and Mr. John Boyse had held a conference with Rev. Peter McMullan, lately from Ireland, and that after prayerfully considering the matter, Mr. McMullan "had agreed to join in communion with the Synod." This led to the following action: On motion,

*Resolved*, That the Rev. Thomas Clark, Rev. Peter McMullan, of South Carolina, together with Mr. John Boyse, probationer, who is to be ordained this summer, be authorized to form themselves into a presbytery under the inspection of this Synod, as soon as convenient.

Incidentally, there is brought to our notice a fact which may as well be mentioned here as elsewhere. When Mr. John Boyse was granted the privilege of taking part in the organization of the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia, it was upon the expressed condition that he be ordained pastor of the united congregations of Coddle Creek and Rocky Creek. Such a thing as ordaining a licentiate *sine titulo*, or in other words, ordaining a probationer before he received a call and signified to his presbytery his acceptance of the call, had no existence among the early Associate Reformed fathers. The name of a probationer was never entered on the roll of Synod, and there were no presbyters among the preaching elders but pastors. Preaching elder, pastor and presbyter meant the same thing.

In May, 1790, the First Presbytery of Pennsylvania reported that "in consequence of the two calls from the Carolinas to Mr. John Boyse, a probationer under the care of said presbytery, he was ordained on July 1st, 1789, as pastor of the united congregations of Coddle Creek, in North Carolina, and Rocky Creek, in South Carolina." So soon as this report was made, a resolution was offered and adopted, that "the name of the Rev. John Boyse be added to the Synod roll, and that he be invited to take his seat in Synod, which he did accordingly."

When the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia was organized at Long Cané, Abbeville county, South Carolina, on the 24th of February, 1790, there were present and took part in the ceremonies, and entered into the organization, Thomas Clark, Peter McMullan, John Boyse and David Bothwell, or-



clained ministers; and James McBride and William Dunlap, ruling elders. James Rogers was present as a probationer, but his name was not entered on the roll. The territory over which this presbytery assumed ecclesiastical jurisdiction, under the King and Head of the Church, was very extensive. It embraced three large States—the two Carolinas and Georgia. In reality there was only a small part of this vast scope of country occupied by the people over whom the presbytery claimed to exercise supervision.

The name of the Associate Reformed congregations, at the time of the organization of the PRESBYTERY OF THE CAROLINAS AND GEORGIA will, no doubt, be a matter of interest to the members of the Associate Reformed Church; at any rate they should be preserved as a memento of the past. For this reason they are here inserted.

In North Carolina there were fourteen, viz.: Hawfields, Eno, Goshen, Fourth Creek (now Statesville), Coddle Creek, New Hope, Gilead, Prosperity, Rock Springs, New Stirling, New Perth, Sardis, Providence and Waxhaw.

In South Carolina there were twenty-two, viz.: Ebenezer (in York county), Steel Creek (now Blackstock), Neely's Creek, Ebenezer (in Fairfield county), Rocky Creek (now Hopewell), Rocky Creek Meeting-house (now Union), Ebenezer (now New Hope), Indian Creek (now King's Creek), Cannon Creek, Prosperity, Cedar Creek (now Cedar Spring), Long Cane, Little Run (now Little River, in Abbeville county), Rocky Springs (in Abbeville county), Generostee, Duet's Corner (now Due West Corner), Diamond Hill, Crystal Spring, Rocky Spring (in Anderson county), Little River (in Laurens county), Warrior's Creek (in Laurens county), and city of Charleston.

In Georgia there were eight, viz.: Queensborough, Buck Head, Big Creek, Joppa, Poplar Springs, Twenty-Six-Mile Creek, Eighteen-Mile Creek, and Rayburn's Creek. In all, forty-three.

It is probable that there were other preaching points, but their names are lost in the wreck of the past.

At some of these points there were houses of worship—very common, rude log cabins, without either chimney, stove or seats. The debris of some of these primitive buildings still



remain as interesting monuments of the trials and triumphs, hardships and patient endurance, of our sainted ancestors.

The organization of the PRESBYTERY OF THE CAROLINAS AND GEORGIA was to Revs. Clark and Boyse an event for which they had labored arduously and prayed devoutly. Its consummation filled their minds with joy. Tradition has handed down the fact that on the day after the organization, Mr. Clark, then a little more than sixty-nine years of age, came to the church clad in canonical robes. The people gazed with wild astonishment. On inquiry why he had laid aside his plain apparel and attired himself in a powdered wig, cocked hat and clergyman's gown, he replied that it was in commemoration of the organization of the presbytery.

The whole number of communicants within the bounds of the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia, at the time of its organization, cannot be accurately ascertained. In some old documents which have been preserved, the number of families is stated as five hundred and fifty, and the number of communicants as eight hundred and forty; but not more than one-half the congregations are reported.

In all these congregations there were Burghers and Anti-Burghers, and in many of them a few Covenanters. The Burghers and Anti-Burghers who had come to America previous to the Revolutionary War, readily coalesced, and went into the Associate Reformed Church. The Burghers who came to America after the war, also joined the Associate Reformed Church without any hesitancy; but the Anti-Burghers for a time hesitated. Ultimately all of them, or nearly all, went into the recently-organized church, but they did so, in many instances, with great reluctance. Some of them first made application to the Covenanter Societies, but were required to make some acknowledgments or explanations before they would be admitted. This they refused to do, and as the best they could do, or would do, under the circumstances, they coalesced with the Associate Reformed Church. They remained in the Associate Reformed Church for a period of more than ten years, and then, as the sequel will show, a very large number of the Societies withdrew and joined the Associate Church.

When we consider all the circumstances by which the Associate Reformed Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia was



surrounded, when it began its existence, we are at a loss to say whether the prospects were bright or gloomy. There were certainly more than forty Societies to be watched over by four ordained ministers and one probationer. The probationer was a boy without experience, and Thomas Clark was an old man, worn out with trials, cares and labors, and a third was a diseased man. These societies were scattered over a long and wide belt of country, and with the exception of a very few, "none of them," in the language of James Rogers, "were fixed in a congregational way." Generally, the people were poor. The common comforts of the present day would have been regarded by them as the most extravagant luxuries. The country was covered with the virgin forest, and, except at long intervals, was inhabited only by wild beasts. The sturdy Scotch-Irish immigrants, rejoicing in the freedom of the land of their adoption, went to work with a determination, by the blessing of Heaven, to succeed, and in due time their efforts were rewarded with an abundance of the necessities and comforts of life.

The ministers went to work in earnest. They preached and prayed, and the blessing of the King and Head of the Church attended their labors. Good old Thomas Clark continued to go in and out before the people of Cedar Spring and Long Cane, until the 26th of December, 1792, when he "came to his grave in full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season." David Bothwell, immediately after the organization of the Presbytery, repaired to Georgia and settled as pastor of Buck Head and Big Creek congregations. On the 25th of December, 1792, one day before the earthly labors of Rev. Thomas Clark were brought to a close, Rev. William Blackstock landed in Charleston, South Carolina. Rev. James Rogers missionated among the Societies until the 23d of February, 1791, when he was ordained and installed pastor of Little River, Cannon's Creek and Indian Creek congregations. This was the first ordination and installation services in which the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia engaged, of which there is a record. The ordination sermon was preached by Rev. Peter McMullan and the charge, probably to both people and pastor, was delivered by Rev. Thomas Clark. The installation of Rev. John



Boyse, as pastor of Rocky Creek and Coddle Creek, was, according to tradition, effected some time during the year 1790 ; but of this we have no certain account.

On the 18th of March, 1793, Rev. John Boyse died. In this there was something touchingly sad. Thomas Clark and John Boyse were the main instruments, in the hands of God, in organizing the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia. In three years and one month, lacking but a few days after the accomplishment of the cherished objects of their hearts, both were translated from the church militant. Boyse lingered on the shores of time less than three months after Clark had crossed the river. Clark was an old man, full of years. Boyse was in the prime of life. God's providences are always right, but often mysterious.

God's providential dealings with the Church demonstrate that men, however eminent for their piety and learning, or however zealous and self-sacrificing they may be in gathering together the dispersed of Israel and in building up the waste places of Zion, are only instruments guided and controlled by the Holy Spirit.

The perpetuity of Christ's Kingdom is not dependent upon the life or labors of any particular man. To short-sighted mortals the very existence of the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia appeared, no doubt, to depend upon Thomas Clark and John Boyse. They were mistaken. God, in due time, raised up other laborers to take their places, and the good work which they began has by others been carried on until the present day.

In the spring of 1794, Rev. Peter McMullan was settled as pastor of Due West Corner, and on the 8th of June, of the same year, Rev. William Blackstock was ordained and installed pastor of Steele Creek, (now Blackstock), Ebenezer and Neely's Creek. The pastoral charges made vacant by the death of Messrs. Clark and Boyse remained in this condition for several years. During this period they received only occasional supplies. On the 19th of September, 1796, Rev. John Hemphill was installed pastor of Hopewell, Union and Little River (now New Hope), and in 1797, Rev. James McKnight was installed pastor of Coddle Creek, Gilead and Prosperity. Thus in the short space of four years after the organization of



the presbytery, the original charge of Mr. Boyse was divided and placed under the pastoral care of two able ministers of the gospel.

In 1795, Mr. William Dixon was licensed, and on the 5th of June, 1797, he was, at Bullock's Creek (now Sharon), ordained and installed pastor of King's Mountain, in Gaston county, North Carolina, and Turkey Creek and Bullock's Creek (now Sharon), in York county, South Carolina.

On the 2d of April, 1798, Rev. Alexander Porter, a graduate of Dickinson College, was ordained and installed pastor of Cedar Spring and Long Cane congregations.

There were now (1798) in the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia, eight settled pastors, viz.: James Rogers, William Blackstock, Peter McMullan, John Hemphill, James McKnight, Alexander Porter and William Dixon. All of them, except James McKnight and Alexander Porter, were born in Ireland, and all except Hemphill, McKnight and Porter, had received their collegiate education at Glasgow, Scotland. Rogers and Porter were Burghers; Hemphill was a Covenanter, and the other five were Anti-Burghers by education and profession.

The basis upon which these coalesced was the Westminster Confession of Faith. All parties—Burghers, Anti-Burghers and Covenanters—now enjoyed in the Carolinas and Georgia those privileges for which they and their ancestors had been earnestly contending and patiently suffering for more than one hundred years. God was smiling upon their efforts and causing them to forget all the hardships through which they had passed. Troubles, however, soon came, and the joy of the Presbytery was turned into sorrow. In its infancy it was called upon to lament the death of the venerable Clark and the lovely Boyse; but now a greater trial awaits it. In the spring of 1798 charges were presented to the presbytery against Rev. Peter McMullan. In these charges, which partook rather of the nature of a complaint, it was stated that Mr. McMullan was guilty of intoxication, of profane swearing, and of collecting money for the purpose of purchasing "Brown's Self-Interpreting Bible," and appropriating the money to his own use; and in addition to this, contracting debts which he did not pay promptly.



The immediate result which flowed from these offenses was that on the 13th of October, 1801, Mr. McMullan was indefinitely suspended from the ministry. The final results will be noticed in their proper place.

The church at Due West was now without a pastor, and remained in this condition for a period of nearly twenty-nine years, or until the 7th of August, 1830.

In October, 1800, the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia was divided into two presbyteries, Broad River being made the dividing line. All that portion of the original presbytery on the east of Broad River was called "First Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia," and all west of the same river received the name, "Second Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia."

For several reasons, some of which are remembered and others forgotten, and none of which were of any great importance, this division of the presbytery was not agreeable to some of the members, and for a number of years the dividing line was practically ignored. The congregations of Cannon Creek, King's Creek and Prosperity were, until 1824, regarded as in the First Presbytery; while Sardis, Providence and Waxhaw were in the Second Presbytery. In 1805, these congregations, which at that time formed the pastoral charge of Rev. Isaac Grier, were by the Synod of the Carolinas, at the request of Mr. Grier, transferred from the Second to the First Presbytery.

At the meeting of the Synod of Cedar Spring, in November, 1825, the following motion was passed, viz: "That the united congregations of King's Creek, Cannon Creek, Prosperity and Head Spring, which, heretofore, have been connected with the First Presbytery, be transferred to the Second Presbytery." So long as the congregations forming the pastoral charge of Rev. William Dixon remained in connection with the Associate Reformed Church, they were under the supervision of the Second Presbytery, although east of Broad river.

In April, 1801, James McGill, a graduate of Dickinson College, and licentiate under the care of the First Presbytery of Pennsylvania, was received by the Second Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia, and in the spring of the next year ordained and installed pastor of Little River and Rocky Springs,



in Abbeville county. This accession to the roll of the presbytery was encouraging. Extremes, however, are usually not far apart. In the month of June, 1801, David Bothwell, the pastor of Buck Head and Big Creek, died. He fell at his post, with the harness on, in the prime of life. The removal, by death, of Clark, Boyse and Bothwell was eminently calculated to impress their companions in labors. No doubt they were made more vigilant.

In May, 1802, the Second Presbytery licensed Mr. Robert Irwin, and in December of the same year ordained and installed him over the congregations of Generostee and Diamond Hill.

On the 15th of April, 1802, the Second Presbytery met at Sharon, York county, South Carolina. The only members present were Messrs. William Dixon and Alexander Porter and their elders. At this meeting a petition was presented to the presbytery asking that the sentence of suspension be removed from Mr. McMullan. This petition was subscribed by a number of Mr. McMullan's neighbors.

Mr. Dixon, who was the intimate friend and boon companion of Mr. McMullan, and the elders, voted to restore Mr. McMullan. Mr. Porter voted against it. The result was that Mr. McMullan was restored.

Were it not on account of the connection which this affair of Mr. McMullan has with another matter of grave importance, it might be dismissed. Very few persons of the present day feel any special interest either in the suspension or restoration of Rev. Peter McMullan. At the time, and for many years afterward, however, it produced intense excitement, and, as we shall see, terminated in a rupture in the Associate Reformed Church.

It is difficult to give a concise, and, at the same time a clear statement of the McMullan difficulty. The facts are as follows: When Mr. McMullan came to America, he was an Anti-Burgher, and seems not to have been aware of the fact that in America there were no Burgher oaths either to take or oppose. The first thing he did was to set himself in deadly opposition to Rev. Thomas Clark. The only ground of this opposition was the fact that Mr. Clark was known to be a Burgher. On meeting with Mr. Clark, his Anti-Burgher feelings cooled down, and he cordially united, as we have seen, with Mr. Clark



in organizing the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia. When the presbytery was divided, he claimed to be dissatisfied about something, and Mr. Dixon, who studied theology with him, and unfortunately had contracted some of his bad habits, espoused the cause of his friend. These two began to abuse publicly the Associate Reformed Church. The probability is that neither of these men was dissatisfied with anything about the Associate Reformed Church except the righteous discipline in the case of Mr. McMullan. The fact cannot be disguised that Mr. McMullan was very intemperate, and that Mr. Dixon followed for a time his example in this respect. In 1798, Mr. McMullan was admonished, but it had no good effect. In 1801 he was, for drunkenness and other criminal acts, silenced. He was, by unfair means, as was thought at the time, restored in 1802. This was in the month of April. On the 2d of September, of the same year, Messrs. McMullan and Dixon informed the Second Presbytery that they declined the further authority of the Associate Reformed Church. Very soon afterward, if not before this, they made application to the Associate Presbytery of Chartiers for admission. In response to this request, two commissioners, Rev. (afterward, Dr.) John Anderson, and Rev. William Wilson, were sent to examine into the nature of the difficulty. The result was, that on the 12th of January, 1803, either at Sharon or at King's Mountain—most probably at the later place—they met and constituted Revs. Peter McMullan, William Dixon and John Cree, into a presbytery, which they called the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas. Mr. Dixon's congregations went with him. Mr. McMullan was without any pastoral charge, and Mr. Cree was pastor of the Associate congregations in Rockbridge county, Virginia.

It is highly probable that neither Mr. Anderson nor Mr. Wilson received a full and correct account of the nature of the difficulty which existed between Revs. Messrs. McMullan and Dixon and the Associate Reformed Church. From all that is known of Messrs. Anderson and Wilson, it is almost certain they would not have fraternized with them, had the course these men had been pursuing been known. Messrs. McMullan and Dixon had published a large and abusive pamphlet, in



which they charge the Associate Reformed Church with "laying aside the Westminster Confession of Faith," and a number of other things which were manifestly false.

It may have been that Mr. McMullan and Mr. Dixon had conscientious scruples with regard to some of the changes which the Associate Reformed Church had made in certain Sections of the Westminster Confession of Faith; but the real difficulty originated in the intemperate habits of these men.

The organization of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas was certainly an unfortunate thing. It divided those who ought to have been united. Pastoral charges were in some instances rent in twain. Pastors and people wasted and worse than wasted their time in detecting and refuting what they supposed to be the errors of those with whom they had once been united, and with whom they ought to have continued to dwell in peace and unity.



## CHAPTER XX.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SYNOD OF THE CAROLINAS—Members Present—Changes which had Taken Place Since the Organization of the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia—Character of those who Organized the Synod of the Carolinas—Their Pastoral Charges—Their Love for Each Other—The McMullan-Dixon Difficulty—Course Pursued by the Synod—Charges Brought Against the Associate Reformed Church by McMullan and Dixon—McMullan and Dixon Deposed—Division in the Associate Reformed Church—The Difference between the Associate Reformed and the Associates—The Result of their Quarreling—The Presbytery of Chartiers—Resolutions of the Associate Synod Concerning Slavery—Rev. Thomas Ketchin and Several Congregations Join the Associate Reformed Church—Remaining History of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas—All the Associates in the South Coalesced with the Associate Reformed Church in 1844—Ministers of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas.

As has been stated elsewhere, the original Synod of the Associate Reformed Church, at its meeting in the city of New York, on the 21st of October, 1802, adopted the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That this Synod will divide itself into four Synods and form a General Synod.

These four Synods were to be known as the SYNOD OF NEW YORK, SYNOD OF PENNSYLVANIA, SYNOD OF SCIOTO and SYNOD OF THE CAROLINAS.

Previous to the dissolution of the old Associate Reformed Synod, a resolution appointing a time and place when and where each of the four subordinate Synods should be organized, was adopted. Ebenezer Church, in Fairfield county, S. C., was specified as the place at which the Synod of the Carolinas should be organized; and the fourth Wednesday of April, 1803, as the time. For some reason, as the following minute will show, the organization was not effected until the 9th of May. The following is the minute:

WHEREAS. The Associate Reformed Synod, at their meeting held at the city of New York, October the 21st, 1802, did, by the fourth resolution of said meeting, authorize the First and Second Presbyteries of the Carolinas and Georgia to constitute one Synod, to be called the Synod of the Carolinas (reference being had to the printed minutes of said meeting will more fully appear); *And whereas*, The Synod appointed the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas to meet at



Mr. Rogers' church the fourth Wednesday of April, 1803, to be opened by a sermon by Rev. James Rogers: Some circumstances prevented the Synod's meeting at the *time* appointed, but through the good hand of our God have we convened at the place nominated, this 9th of May, 1803.

Rev. James Rogers, who was, by the old Associate Reformed Synod, appointed moderator, preached a sermon from the words: "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."—JER. 3:15. The sermon being ended, Mr. Rogers constituted the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas by prayer. There were present seven ordained ministers, two probationers and six ruling elders. Their names were James Rogers, William Blackstock, John Hemphill, James McKnight, Alexander Porter, James McGill and Robert Irwin, ordained ministers; and Isaac Grier and James McAuley, probationers. The names of the ruling elders were: Charles Montgomery, Alexander Stewart, Andrew McQuiston, Henry Hunter, Arthur Morrow and Duke Bell.

Of these fathers of the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas (now Associate Reformed Synod of the South), it may be safely said that they were men mighty in the Scriptures. With the exception of Rev. James McGill, who for many years labored under a partial insanity, they all were men of more than ordinary natural abilities, and of rare intellectual and theological attainments in their day. It would, perhaps, be extravagant to say that they were finished scholars or distinguished pulpit orators. These, it is supposed, they were not; but they all were instructive preachers. They were pastors who fed the people of God "with knowledge and understanding." They are all dead. For half a century all that was mortal of these pious men has been mingling with its kindred dust; but by their self-sacrificing labors and godly examples they made an impress upon society which is still visible. It is claimed for them that they lived eminently pious and useful lives and went down to their graves in peace, and bequeathed to the congregations which, under God, they planted and watered, a rich inheritance in their untarnished names.

The pastoral charges in connection with the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas, at the time of its organization, were seven, being equal to the number of ordained ministers. James Rogers was pastor of Cannon Creek, King's Creek and



Ebenezer. William Blackstock was pastor of Steele Creek, Ebenezer and Neely's Creek. John Hemphill was pastor of Hopewell, Union and Little River (now New Hope). James McKnight was pastor of Coddle Creek, Gilead and Prosperity. Alexander Porter was pastor of Cedar Spring and Long Cane. James McGill was pastor of Little River and Rocky Springs, both in Abbeville county, S. C. Robert Irwin was pastor elect, but probably not installed, of Generostee and Diamond Hill.

These seven pastors were bound together by the strongest possible ties. In each other's temporal, spiritual and eternal welfare they were deeply interested. They had the same great and good cause—the salvation of immortal souls—at heart. They had no private ends to accomplish; no individual purposes to effect. Of them it may be truthfully said: "They took up their cross and followed Jesus." In all sincerity they endeavored to live at peace with each other and with all men. By the blessing of God, they lived in perfect harmony with each other. If, as a Latin historian says, to love the same thing and to hate the same thing constitutes friendship, then the fathers of the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas were devoted friends.

With all men they could not live in peace. Rev. Messrs. McMullan, Dixon and Cree, as we have seen, had, on the 12th of January, 1803, been constituted into a presbytery, which received the name, Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas.

At the first meeting of the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, Rev. Peter McMullan and William Dixon have declined the communion of the Associate Reformed Church in a disorderly, schismatical and scandalous manner, and the reasons accompanying their declinature are, some of them, false, and others frivolous; therefore,

*Resolved*, That they be suspended from the office of the holy ministry, and be cited before the bar of the Synod at their next meeting.

Mr. McMullan had been suspended, as is stated elsewhere, by the Second Presbytery, on the 13th of October, 1801, but was restored on the 15th of April, 1802. Messrs. McMullan and Dixon were regularly cited to appear before the Synod; but to these citations they paid no attention whatever. The matter continued to be the only vexing question before the



Synod for the next two meetings. In April, 1805, Messrs. McMullan and Dixon were solemnly deposed from the gospel ministry. This, however, did not end the matter. A very large number of the Societies soon became disaffected towards the Associate Reformed Church, and in a very few years several congregations were divided—part remaining in the Associate Reformed Church, and part withdrawing from that church and joining the Associate Church. These divisions were not unattended with bitter feelings, vexatious words and evil consequences. The Societies, at first very weak, were, by these strifes, made weaker. God, no doubt, overruled the whole of this affair for his own glory and the good of his people; but it was certainly one of those instances in which He brings light out of darkness, order out of confusion and good out of evil.

The whole trouble grew out of the unministerial, not to say sinful, conduct of Messrs. McMullan and Dixon. So far as mortals can see, there was no other cause for the rupture in the Associate Reformed Societies; neither was there any other ground for the organization of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas.

These two denominations, instead of stimulating each other to greater diligence, and provoking each other to deeds of "charity which thinketh no evil," wasted their time and exhausted their strength in useless attempts to crush each other's supposed erroneous opinions on certain points out of existence. Both grew, but their growth was comparatively slow. No one, except themselves, could discover their differences. The Associate Reformed people could only say *Sibboleth*, while the Associates *thought* they could say distinctly *Shibboleth*; but both meant the same thing. In all their opinions and practices, both were genuine Seceders to the core. Both claimed to be scrupulous followers of Boston and the Erskines.

So far as anything to the contrary is known, all—certainly the overwhelming majority of the Seceders, both Anti-Burghers and Burghers, in the South—entered into the Associate Reformed Church, when the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia was organized. A few, it is admitted, entered with reluctance the Union Church, as it was called; but these were gradually becoming attached to its principles and practices.



Had not the difficulty sprung up with Mr. McMullan, the probability is that the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas would never have had an existence.

Had all the Reformed Presbyterians and all the Associates in the South united at the close of the last century, forgotten their differences and worked harmoniously together, it is but reasonable to suppose that the particular form of Presbyterianism which they all heartily embrace, and those practices which they all loved and clung to would have become the prevailing form of Christianity all over the sections of country in which they first settled. This they did not do. They quarreled among themselves, and the rich inheritance which God gave them rapidly passed largely into the possession of other Christian denominations. No one can blame other denominations for cultivating the field which the Associates, Associate Reformed and Reformed Presbyterians, in their divided state, could not cultivate.

There is no ground for a belief that they differed on any fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, and it is absolutely certain that in their form of church government and modes of worship, they were rigidly and strictly identical. As Christians, there was nothing to keep them from uniting; but their Seceder and Covenanter prejudices kept them at arm's length from each other.

We dare not lay the whole blame of this division exclusively on any one of these three denominations. No doubt they were all to blame. Like the rest of the human family, they were but men—short-sighted men. The reasons which kept all the Reformed Presbyterians, and all the Associate Presbyterians from uniting, in the formation of the Associate Reformed Church, have not as yet been discovered. Probably some good and valid reasons did exist; but if so they are among the secret things which belong only to God. For the organization of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas there was no proper reason. It had its beginning, as we have seen, in the waywardness and disobedience of Messrs. McMullan and Dixon. The Associate Presbytery of Chartiers, by whose authority the organization was effected, and the good men, Dr. John Anderson and Rev. William Wilson, who officiated on the occasion, were in no way to be blamed, unless it be that they were over-



zealous for their denomination. The facts in the case they seem never to have fully understood. This division, in the good providence of God, as the sequel will show, has been healed, and by many of the younger ministers and members of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South it is scarcely known that there was once within the territorial limits of the Associate Reformed Synod a presbytery which was called the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas.

In May, 1831, the Associate Synod of North America met in Cannonsburg, Pa. At this meeting of the Synod a series of resolutions were adopted in which all the members of the Associate Church who owned slaves were required to set their slaves free. At that time there were nine presbyteries in connection with the Associate Synod, and but one—the Presbytery of the Carolinas—particularly implicated with the institution of slavery. There were a few slave-holders in some of the other presbyteries, but not many. Such being the case, the resolutions affected only the members of this presbytery. The resolutions were protested against by six members of the Synod, three of whom were members of the Presbytery of the Carolinas; one was a member of the Presbytery of Miami; and two were members of the Presbytery of Chartiers.

By the resolutions, the members of the Associate Church, holding slaves, were not only required to free their slaves, but they were required to free them forthwith. The protesters did not object to the law requiring the slaves to be set free; but, for a number of reasons, they objected to the precipitant manner in which it was proposed to enforce the law. Very many years previous to this time, the Associate Synod had adopted anti-slavery resolutions. In fact, the Associate Synod was, from its earliest existence, decidedly and avowedly opposed to slavery.

In 1831, when the resolutions referred to above were adopted, there were, in the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas, eight ministers and twenty-four congregations. Rev. Andrew Heron, D. D., was pastor of Ebenezer, Timber Ridge and Broad Creek, in Rockbridge county, Va. Rev. John Wallace was pastor of New Lebanon, Monroe county, Va. Rev. Thomas Ketchin was pastor of Shiloh, in Lancaster county, and Neely's Creek, in York county, S. C. Rev. Abraham Anderson, D. D., was



pastor of Steele Creek and Bethany (now Back Creek), in Mecklenburg county, N. C. Rev. James Lyle was pastor of Smyrna, in Chester, and Little River and Bethel (Winnsboro), in Fairfield county, S. C. Rev. W. M. McElmee, D. D., was pastor of Sharon and Tirzah, in York county, S. C. Rev. Joseph Banks was pastor-elect of Knob Creek and Pisgah, in North Carolina, and Bethany and Sardis, in South Carolina. Rev. William Dixon being superannuated, was without a charge.

The vacancies in connection with the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas, in 1831, were Virgin Springs, New Stirling, Cambridge, Gilead, McGailiard's, Cochran's Vale, Elgin and Piedmont, with some weak missionary stations.

From 1831, the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas began to decline rapidly. Rev. Messrs. Heron, Anderson, Wallace, McElwee and Banks, being unable to enforce the Act of Synod, left their congregations and went North. On the 28th of March, 1832, Rev. Thomas Ketchin and the congregations of Shiloh and Neely's Creek tendered their declinature to the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas. The reasons which they assigned for taking this course were: First, Because, in passing the Act, the Synod has unscripturally interfered in civil matters. Second, The Act of the Synod sowed the seeds of rebellion in the civil community in which Mr. Ketchin and the members of his charge dwell. For these and other similar reasons, Mr. Ketchin and his congregations withdrew from the Associate Church.

It was not long until it was discovered that several other congregations, whose pastors had gone off and left them, were ready to join with Mr. Ketchin and his pastoral charge in conferring with the Associate Reformed Church with reference to a union. The object being agreeable to the Associate Reformed Church, a committee, appointed by that church, met a similar committee appointed by the Associate Church at Shiloh, in February, 1833.

There were present, from the First Presbytery of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, Rev. Isaac Grier, D. D., and ruling elders Robert Nelson and Alexander Nisbet. The delegates from the Associate Church were Rev. Thomas Ketchin and Mr. William Reid, from Shiloh; John Campbell, from



Neely's Creek; John McElwee, from Bethany; John Falls, from Pisgah; and Charles McIlwain, from Tirzah.

When the parties came face to face, they readily agreed on every point, or were willing to forbear in love with respect to those points in which they could not agree. But for the apparent precipitancy of the matter, the union would have been formally consummated at the first meeting. Prudently, they agreed to meet again at Shiloh on the 10th of July.

At the second meeting the delegates from the Associate Reformed Church were Rev. Messrs. Warren Henniken and Isaac Grier, D. D., and ruling elders Alexander Scott, Robert Fee and James Irvine. The delegates from the Associate Church were Rev. Thomas Ketchin, Messrs. William Reid, William Campbell, Samuel Falkner and Charles McIlwain.

The union was consummated readily and good grew out of it to all concerned. The churches which came with Rev. Mr. Ketchin into the Associate Reformed Church were Shiloh, in Lancaster county, S. C.; Neely's Creek, Tirzah, Sharon and Bethany, in York county, S. C.; Sardis, in Union county, S. C.; and Pisgah and Bethany (now Back Creek), in North Carolina. For reasons which need not be mentioned, the congregation of Neely's Creek retraced its steps and remained nominally in connection with the Associate Presbytery until 1844.

Rev. James Lyle was the only pastor left in the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas. The presbytery continued to exist until April, 1844, when its ministers and nearly all of its members united with the Associate Reformed Synod of the South.

As a separate and distinct organization the usefulness of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas measurably ceased after 1831. The congregations began to dwindle down, and the prospects were intensely gloomy. The subject of slavery began to be the absorbing question in the country, both politically and ecclesiastically.

It is probable that the majority of those in connection with the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas, in 1831, had conscientious scruples about the moral right of one man to hold another man in a state of absolute slavery. It is certain that three of the pastors—McElwee, Heron and Anderson—declared at the time that "slavery is clearly condemned by the law of



God." This doctrine they taught their people, from the pulpit and around the fireside, and it is true beyond a doubt that some of their people accepted their teachings on this subject, as founded upon and agreeable to the Scriptures. It is also true that perhaps more than one-half—certainly more than one-half in some congregations—were slave-holders. Many of those slave-holders, strange as it may appear, were by no means the advocates of the institution. They regarded it as an evil which had been inflicted upon the country by the British government during the colonial times, and perpetuated by circumstances over which, in many instances, they had no control.

The peculiar circumstances of the people, in connection with the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas, was such, or at least they thought they were such, that they could not liberate their slaves *immediately*. For many years both pastors and people had been diligent in bringing up their slaves in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Many of these slaves were members of the church, in good and regular standing. In fact, in some of the congregations more than one-half the regular worshippers were negro slaves. In Mr. Heron's charge, in 1831, there were ninety-seven slaves; of these, one-half, or forty-nine, had been taught to read; six were members of the church; and sixty-four worshipped regularly with their masters. In Mr. Ketchin's charge there were three hundred and sixty-five slaves. Of these the overwhelming majority—all but about sixty—had been taught to read, and many were members of the church, and all worshipped with their masters. In Mr. Anderson's charge there were two hundred and five slaves. Sixty-nine of these could read; eight were members of the church; and one hundred and fifty-seven were constantly being instructed in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. In the charge of Mr. McElwee there were one hundred and fifty-seven slaves, and in the old charge of Mr. Dixon there were about the same number. In both of these charges all, or nearly all, the slaves were taught to read, and a very large proportion of them sat down at the same communion table with their masters, and with them celebrated the death of Jesus Christ.

It was regarded impossible, under the circumstances, to free the slaves "immediately." The pastors having in good faith



made the effort to carry out the law of the church, but failing, demitted their charges and went to regions of country in which the institution of slavery did not exist.

It is probable that had the Associate Synod not been so hasty and rash in their efforts to free the Presbytery of the Carolinas of slavery, that in due time most of those in connection with the presbytery would have manumitted their slaves. The Synod thought and acted differently. The result was that nearly all the people in connection with the presbytery soon ceased to have any organic connection with the Synod. The members generally adopted the opinions concerning slavery which were held by the Associate Reformed Church, and with that denomination coalesced or united.

For a number of years previous to that union, it became evident to the leading members of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas that it was only a matter of time when many of the small societies under their care would perish, not only to the Associate Presbytery, but also to Christianity, unless a union was formed with the Associate Reformed Church. Negotiations were begun and carried on in the spirit of brotherly love, and happily consummated at New Perth, N. C., on the 15th of April, 1844. By the authority of the Associate Reformed Synod, the union was formally consummated by the First Presbytery. The following is the minute of the transaction:

WHEREAS, The First Associate Reformed Presbytery and the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas have been for some time negotiating with a view to union, and have concluded these negotiations on terms hitherto expressed, being mutually satisfactory and approved by the Associate Reformed Synod of the South; be it, therefore,

*Resolved*, That this union be now consummated (the other presbytery being present) by the two presbyteries extending to each other the right hand of fellowship; this being the formal act by which the two bodies coalesce.

Preparatory to carrying this resolution into effect, Mr. Ketchin invoked the divine blessing by prayer, after which the right hand of fellowship was extended. A part of the one hundred and second psalm was then sung, and thanksgiving to God for the present signal blessing by Mr. Thompson, of Virginia.

The names of Horatio Thompson and John Patrick, ministers, and John Q. Cochran, John Young and James McCay, elders, were added to the roll of the First Presbytery of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South.



From the time of its organization, in January, 1803, to the time of its union with the Associate Reformed Church, in April, 1844—a period of a little more than forty-one years—there were in connection with the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas fourteen ministers, viz.: Abraham Anderson, Joseph Banks, John Cree, William Dixon, Andrew Heron, Thomas Ketchin, James Lyle, William Meek McElwee, Peter McMullan, John Mushat, John Patrick, James Pringle, John Wallace and Archibald Whyte. All these were men of more than ordinary attainments and several of them were among the first pulpit orators of their day. With one or two exceptions they were men of exemplary piety. That they accomplished, in their isolated condition, some good no one will doubt; but the good done was certainly little. It required a continual effort to perpetuate mere crotchets.



## CHAPTER XXI.

SLOW GROWTH of the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas—Causes Emigration and Withdrawals in order to Join the Associates—Number of Communicants in 1803—Associate Congregations all in First Presbytery—Strength of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas—Its Rapid Growth at First—Anti-Burghers All Join It—Growth of the Associate Reformed Church—Number of Presbyteries in 1804—General Synod Organized—Its Defects—Want of Harmony among the Members—Synods of Scioto and the Carolinas Become Dissatisfied—Lexington Academy—Memorial in its Behalf—Memorial Shows a Want of Confidence in the Theological Seminary—Some Envious—John Mason's Letters—His Talents—The Mason-Matthews and Clark Difficulty—Settled to the Satisfaction of No One—Synod of Scioto Withdraws and the Synod of the Carolinas Requests to be Allowed to Become Independent—The Request Granted—Synod of the South Organized—Its Platform the Constitution as Adopted in 1799—Members Constituting the Synod of the South—No Deaths in Nineteen Years.

The growth of the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas, for a number of years, was scarcely perceptible. The increase in the number of ministers, in a period of nineteen years, was only six, and the increase in the number of communicants was about in the same ratio. In 1803 there were in the Synod seven ordained ministers, and in 1822 there were only eleven. The number of communicants in 1803 was certainly more than one thousand, and perhaps less than two thousand. The number of communicants in the pastoral charges in the First Presbytery, including Indian Creek, Cannon Creek and Prosperity, in the Second Presbytery, amounted to eight hundred and fifty, and it is probable that the number of communicants in the settled congregations in the Second Presbytery, and in the vacant congregations in both presbyteries, were, at least, one thousand. This number is certainly not too large, since, in Cedar Spring and Long Cane congregations there were, in 1801, two hundred and sixty families and five hundred and twenty communicants. The other pastoral charges in the Second Presbytery, and the vacancies in both presbyteries were weak.

The membership of the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas, at the time of its organization, may be safely estimated at nineteen hundred.



Some of the congregations seem to have decreased rapidly for a few years, and after that to have increased as rapidly. As an example of this fluctuation, it may be stated that in 1804 the number of communicants in Mr. Hemphill's charge was three hundred and fifteen, and in 1807 the number was only two hundred and eighty. The number of communicants in this same charge was, in a few years afterwards, more than four hundred.

For a few years immediately after the organization of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas, and the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas, the people were in a very unsettled condition. In some cases congregations divided—part withdrawing from the Associate Reformed Church and connecting with the Associate Church. In other instances, whole congregations withdrew from the Associate Reformed Church, and connected with the Associate Church.

The congregations under the pastoral care of Rev. William Dixon went with him to the Associate Church, and the pastoral charge of Rev. William Blackstock, and several other single congregations were divided and nearly broken up. All these divisions occurred in the congregations within the territorial limits of the First Presbytery. So far as is known, no Associate congregation was ever organized in the territory occupied by the Second Presbytery. There were at a late date, and perhaps as early as 1803, a few Associate families in Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee which were occasionally visited by Associate ministers; but so far as is known, none of these were organized into congregations by the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas.

Although there were no Associate congregations organized within the bounds of the Second Presbytery, the people were not entirely harmonious. There were a few persons who did not unite heartily with the Associate Reformed Church. Mr. McMullan continued to preach in the neighborhood of Due West—generally in his own house—until 1806, when he was suspended by the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas.

It is probable that had Mr. McMullan abandoned his intemperate habits after the organization of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas, that he would have won back the affections of his former charge, and they as a whole, or at least a ma-



jority of them, would have followed him into the Associate Church. As it was, the church at Due West remained vacant for nearly thirty years.

The number of those adhering to Messrs. McMullan and Dixon, at first, were very few—not more than three hundred. The whole number of communicants at any one time in connection with the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas did not amount to more than fifteen hundred. In 1830—the most flourishing period of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas—there were in its seven pastoral charges only about one thousand communicants, and the vacancies, with one or two exceptions, were very small.

The growth of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas was very considerable during the first five or six years of its existence. This was the result of two causes. The one cause was the number of those who left the Associate Reformed Church and joined it. The other was that nearly all the Anti-Burghers who came into the country united with the Associate rather than with the Associate Reformed Church.

This was the case in every section of America. The Anti-Burgher branch of the Secession Church, in both Scotland and Ireland regarded with decided disapprobation the Associate Reformed Church. Few of its members coming to America joined it. Of the donations made to establish the Associate Reformed Theological Seminary, nearly all were obtained from Burghers. Of the Anti-Burghers, it may be said they were generally opposed to all negotiations having a union in view, and opposed to unions when formed. Anti-Burgher ministers rarely ever coalesced with the Associate Reformed Church.

In addition to the causes already mentioned, the growth of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South was greatly retarded by emigration. Previous to the organization of the Synod of the Carolinas, the people in connection with the Associate Reformed Church began to emigrate to the north-western States. This drain was kept up for fully thirty years. By it the numerical strength of the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas was, at one time, reduced below what it was when the organization was effected.



The history of the Synod of the Carolinas is necessarily involved in the history of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church. That we may be enabled to understand the former it will be necessary to repeat some things which have already been related concerning the history of the latter.

Notwithstanding the many difficulties with which it had to contend, the growth of the Associate Reformed Church, for the first twenty years, was rapid and steady. Three presbyteries during that time had grown into eight, and the number of her ministers and members had been more than doubled. As has been stated elsewhere, in 1801 the Associate Reformed Synod took the initiatory steps with reference to forming a General Synod. In 1804, on the 30th of May, the General Synod met and was regularly constituted.

For several years the church enjoyed peace and prosperity. It was deliberately said that the General Synod "was founded in pride and perished in plunder." It is certain that it perished in plunder; but it is scarcely correct—certainly not charitable—to say, without some qualification, that it was founded in pride. Surely the fathers of the Associate Reformed Church were not wholly prompted by pride to organize the General Synod. There was a defect, it is readily admitted, in the General Synod; but it is not easy to state correctly in few words in what that defect consisted. The defect was similar to that which existed in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in the time of Boston and the Erskines. It was a defect which may exist in any representative body. The defect was not in the system, but in a wrong application or abuse of the principles involved in that system.

The Associate Reformed Church was spread over a large extent of territory. The larger number of the members of the denomination were in the States of New York and Pennsylvania. In these States were located the oldest and wealthiest churches. The pastors of these churches claimed a kind of primogenial right to have under their control all the institutions of the denomination.

It matters not whether this was actually the case, or whether it was a mere suspicion on the part of others. It is true beyond a doubt that the members of the Synods of Scioto and the Carolinas began, at a very early period to show signs that



they were not satisfied with the prospects. It is positively asserted that the resolution to divide the old Synod into two or more synods and form a General Synod was unanimous. At that meeting (in 1801) there were only a few representatives present from that portion of the denomination west of the Alleghany mountains, and but one from the Presbyteries of the Carolinas and Georgia.

At the first meeting of the General Synod, "a memorial from the Presbytery of Kentucky, on the subject of the Lexington Academy, was read, with an extract from the minutes of said presbytery, and an extract from the minutes of the Synod of Scioto. The object of this paper was to prevail upon the General Synod to take said academy under their patronage; to grant to it one-half of the books belonging to the Theological library; to appropriate to its use all the money to be collected in the future within the bounds of the Synod of Scioto; and to allow the trustees to lay before the General Synod, at every meeting, an account of the said academy."

To this memorial the General Synod replied that they could not, "consistently, with good faith, divide the moneys contributed expressly for the Seminary, nor the books bought with the money."

The Synod of Scioto was, however, allowed to retain the contributions made by its own members to the public fund within its bounds, for the next three years, and devote those contributions to the maintenance of Lexington Academy.

In 1806 the trustees of Lexington Academy petitioned the General Synod for a continuance of the appropriation; "and that Mr. William Wallace, a student of divinity, be exempt from a compliance with the Act relative to the Theological Seminary, so far as not to attend on the Professor."

These memorials and petitions clearly indicated that there was not concert of action among the Synods composing the General Synod. It is as clear as the noon-day sun that whatever aid was rendered the Lexington Academy was just so much support withheld from the contemplated theological seminary. The denomination was, at the time, unable to equip fully one seminary, much less two. For more than ten years the church had been exerting itself to provide the means by which its candidates for the ministry might be thoroughly



prepared for their work. This, on account of their poverty, they were unable to accomplish. Generous friends in Great Britain came to their aid and contributed, "on account of the Synod, six thousand four hundred and sixty-three dollars." Of this amount, the sum of five thousand one hundred and forty-seven dollars was contributed for "the sole use of the theological seminary." By far the larger part of this amount was, by direction of the Synod, expended in the purchase of books for the use of the theological seminary. Had the General Synod undertaken to divide the books thus obtained, they would have acted in bad faith towards the donors.

It is difficult to discover the real cause or causes which led to the sending up of the memorial and petition already mentioned, and in such matters it is dangerous to conjecture. It may, however, be safely said that there were in the Associate Reformed Church, at the time of the founding of the theological seminary, some persons who were more than suspicious that some of the acknowledged leaders in the church were bent on removing the old landmarks. There were others who, no doubt, were troubled with a spirit of envy.

In 1798, Rev. John M. Mason published a series of letters on "Frequent Communion and Sacramental Fasts and Thanksgivings." Many good people in the Associate Reformed Church began to regard Mr. Mason with suspicion, on account of the sentiments expressed in these letters. By these persons he was regarded as an innovator.

In addition to this, it is a fact that the extraordinary talents possessed by Mr. Mason, and the almost unlimited influence he exerted in the denomination, rendered him an object of envy. How much these things had to do in prompting the memorial and petition which came up from the Presbytery of Kentucky in regard to the Lexington Academy, it will not be undertaken to say. No matter what was the cause, nor whether it was a sufficient cause, it is a fact that from its very beginning there was a want of entire harmony and implicit confidence among the members of General Synod.

The Synods of Scioto and the Carolinas were not entirely satisfied; neither were all the members of the other two Synods satisfied. Notwithstanding this fact, the General Synod had a comparatively prosperous and harmonious existence for about six years.



In May, 1811, the case of Messrs. Mason, Matthews and Clarke came up for adjudication. As all the circumstances connected with that case, and the decision of the General Synod, have been minutely related elsewhere, they need not be repeated here. From that day on to the hour of its final dissolution, the General Synod was regarded by the subordinate Synods of Scioto and the Carolinas as a mere partisan court. In 1819 the Synod of Scioto withdrew and declared itself no longer subordinate to the General Synod, and in 1820 dissolved and reconstituted itself as an independent and coördinate Synod. At this time it took to itself the name of "The Associate Reformed Synod of the West."

To the Synod of the Carolinas, at its meeting at Steele Creek, on the 2d of April, 1821, the First Presbytery reported that "It is the opinion of a majority of this presbytery that the relation which has hitherto existed between the sub-Synod of the Carolinas and Georgia and the General Synod should be dissolved." On the next day (April 3d), this report of the First Presbytery was taken into serious consideration, after which the following resolution was offered by Rev. John Hemphill, and seconded by Mr. John Nisbet, ruling elder from Mr. Blackstock's charge, in Lancaster county, S. C.:

WHEREAS, Our distance from the place of synodical meeting is so great that it is altogether impracticable to maintain a full representation in General Synod; And whereas, It is supposed that the interests of truth and godliness may be promoted as successfully in a state of separation from General Synod; therefore,

*Resolved*, That ..... be appointed a committee to write to General Synod requesting permission to form ourselves into a sister coördinate Synod.

The above resolution was adopted and the blank filled by inserting the names of Rev. Messrs. John Hemphill and John T. Pressley. The committee prepared a letter, which was unanimously approved by the Synod and sent to the General Synod by Mr. Henry S. Wilkin, a probationer in connection with the Presbytery of New York. In reply to this letter, the following resolutions were adopted by the General Synod, on the 19th of May following:

1st. *Resolved*, That the Synod of the Carolinas be and they hereby are authorized to erect themselves into a separate church, if they continue to judge the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom, in that quarter of the country, to call for such a measure.



22. *Resolved*, That in the event of the Synod of the Carolinas becoming a separate sister church, this Synod will continue to cherish, as heretofore, a Christian affection for all members and ministers of said church, and be ready to keep up the most friendly correspondence, according to any plan that may be mutually agreed on between the two churches.

On the 1st of April, 1822, the Synod of the Carolinas met at King's Creek, Newberry county, S. C. All the ministers, except Mr. McKnight, were present, and a ruling elder from all the pastoral charges except those of Rev. Messrs. Eleazar Harris and Joseph Lowry. On the first day, "It was moved by Messrs. John T. Pressley and Joseph Lowry, that inquiry be made of the members whether they judge that the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom in this quarter of the country call for a separation according to the answer given by the General Synod to our petition on that subject. The members were unanimous in the opinion that the present state of the Church justified such a measure. It was, therefore, moved by Messrs. Hemphill and Rogers, that the Synod act on the permission of General Synod, and agreeably thereto resolve ourselves into an INDEPENDENT Co-ORDINATE Synod."

To this resolution there was not a dissenting vote. So far as anything to the contrary appears, the members were all of one mind.

Immediately after the adoption of the resolution by which the Synod of the Carolinas was erected into an Independent and Coördinate Synod, the following motion by Revs. John Hemphill and William Blackstock was unanimously adopted :

*Resolved*, That this Synod be hereafter known by the name of the ASSOCIATE REFORMED SYNOD OF THE SOUTH; adhering to the constitution and standards of the Associated Reformed Church, in that sense, in which they were received when adopted at Greencastle, in the year 1799, and uniformly acted upon until the year 1811.

Such was the origin of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. This event took place thirty-two years after the organization of the Associate Reformed Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia, and nineteen years subsequent to the organization of the Synod of the Carolinas. If the organization of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas is excepted, very little change had taken place in the general features of the Associate Reformed Church in the South during either of these periods. When the Associate Reformed Presbytery of the



Carolinas was organized, there were present and participated in the ceremonies connected with that transaction four ordained ministers and one probationer. When the Synod of the Carolinas was organized, there were present seven ordained ministers and two probationers; and when the Synod of the Carolinas severed its connection with the General Synod, there were in connection with the church eleven ordained ministers. Six of these—James Rogers, William Blackstock, John Hemphill, James McKnight, Robert Irwin and Isaac Grier—were present in 1803, when the Synod was organized. John Renwick, Joseph Lowry, Charles Strong, John T. Pressley and Eleazar Harris had been added during the period which intervened between 1803 and 1822. During that period of nineteen years, not a single minister in connection with the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas died. James McGill and Alexander Porter both went to Ohio; the former in 1807, the latter in 1814, but both were alive in 1822.

With regard to the numerical increase of the denomination during the period that transpired between the years 1803 and 1822, it is impossible to speak with any great degree of certainty. Only a few statistical tables of that period have come down to the present time, and these few are exceedingly defective. It is probable that the increase by accessions was balanced, if not more than balanced, by the decrease arising from emigration. The vacancies having the ordinances of God's house dispensed to them only at long and irregular intervals, as was natural, dwindled down until all were ready to perish; and all of the pastoral charges were weakened numerically by emigration.



## CHAPTER XXII.

OBJECT THE SYNOD of the Carolinas had in View in Withdrawing from the General Synod—Did not Design Organizing a New Denomination—Their Constitution and Standards—The Basis of the Union which Formed the Associate Reformed Church—Westminster Confession of Faith—Its History—Westminster Assembly—By Whom Called, and for What—Time and Place of Meeting—Standards of the Associate Reformed Church—Westminster Confession of Faith Adopted by the Associate Reformed Church—Certain Sections Changed—These all Refer to the Power of the Civil Magistrate—The Sections Quoted—Standards of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South—Mistaken Notions about the Withdrawal of the Synod of the Carolinas—Slavery had Nothing to Do with the Withdrawal—Position of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South with Reference to Slavery in 1822—Real Cause of Separation—Believed that a Portion of the General Synod had Abandoned the Standards of the Associate Reformed Church—Subjects of Controversy—Communion and Psalmody—The Standards Quoted—The Word “Communion,” as Used in the Standards—XXVth and XXVIth Chapters of the Confession—Little Constitution—The Overture Quoted—Act to Amend the Constitution Quoted—Mason’s Plea Published—The Grounds Taken in It—Psalmody—Standards on Psalmody Quoted.

When the Synod of the Carolinas withdrew from the General Synod, it was not contemplated to foist upon the world a new Christian denomination ; neither was it designed to introduce into the Associate Reformed Church any new doctrines or strange practices. On the contrary, the members of the Synod unanimously declared that it was their intention to adhere “to the Constitution and standards of the Associate Reformed Church, in that sense in which they were received when adopted at Greencastle, in the year 1799, and uniformly acted upon until the year 1811.”

What, then, it may be inquired, were the Constitution and standards of the Associate Reformed Church, adopted in 1799, to which THE ASSOCIATE REFORMED SYNOD OF THE SOUTH pledged adherence? It may also be asked: If the Synod of the South proposed to adhere to these standards, why withdraw from the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church? It is supposed that a clear and truthful reply to these two questions will exhibit to the world the basis of doctrine and practice upon which the Associate Reformed Synod of the South has ever been endeavoring to build.



When the Associate Reformed Church was organized, in 1782, the Ninth Article in the basis of union read thus :

Both parties (Associates and Covenanters), when united, shall adhere to the Westminster Confession of Faith; the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter; the Directory for Worship; and Propositions Concerning Church Government.

This was reiterated in the First Article of the Little Constitution.

### WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH.

Of the Westminster Confession of Faith we have not the space to say much ; nor is it deemed necessary. Without some knowledge, however, of that formula of truth as accepted, believed and practiced by the Associate Reformed Church, the history of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South cannot be well understood.

The history of the Westminster Confession of Faith is intimately and inseparably connected with nearly every great national event which has transpired in Christendom during the last two hundred and thirty years. It stands as the beginning point from which the greatest civil and ecclesiastical revolutions the world ever witnessed are reckoned. It is the result of the labors of a body of divines assembled in obedience to the call of the English Parliament. The ordinance calling for this assembly bears date June the 12th, 1643 ; and July the 1st, of the same year, is named as the time for their meeting. The assembly, as selected by the Parliament, consisted of one hundred and twenty-one divines, ten lords and twenty commoners. The place at which they were appointed to meet was " Westminster, in the chapel called King Henry the Seventh's Chapel." The names of those designed to constitute the assembly are all mentioned in the ordinance. The divines selected by the Parliament represented all the various creeds in existence at that time in England. There were High Church Episcopalians, with a strong tendency to Popery ; and Low Church Episcopalians, with an earnest desire for more vital godliness and fewer unscriptural forms and popish ceremonies. There were Calvinists and Arminians ; Pedobaptists and Anabaptists ; Presbyterians, Erastians and Independents.



However conflicting might have been their views, it is admitted that they were all learned men, and no grave charge damaging to the moral character has been brought against any of the Westminster divines. They were godly men. The assembly has ever been called the Westminster Assembly, from the place at which it met.

On the 1st of July, 1643, the day mentioned in the ordinance, the assembly met in the Abbey Church, Westminster. Sixty-three clerical members were present.

Of the one hundred and fifty-one members appointed only one hundred and twenty-five, at any one time, appeared. Only a few of the rigidly prelatie clergymen ever attended, and those who did took but little interest in the labors of the assembly. The prelatie clergy generally sided with the King, favoring monarchy and opposing republicanism. Although all the prominent religious denominations in England were represented by the divines selected by the Parliament, the assembly was actually composed of Presbyterians, Independents and Erastians. It is not strange that the prelatie party did not attend, since one avowed object in calling the assembly was to free the church of prelacy.

The object for which this assembly was called is plainly stated in the ordinance of the English Parliament. It is contained in the following extract :

Whereas, amongst the infinite blessings of Almighty God upon this nation, none is, or can be, more dear unto us than the purity of our religion; and for that as yet many things remain in the liturgy, discipline and government of the church which do necessarily require a further and more perfect reformation than yet hath been attained: And whereas, it hath been declared and resolved by the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament that the present church government, by archbishops, bishops and their chancellors, commissaries, deans and chapters, archdeacons and other ecclesiastical officers depending upon the hierarchy, is evil, and justly offensive and burdensome to the kingdom, a great impediment to reformation and the growth of religion; and that therefore, they are resolved that the same shall be taken away, and that such a government shall be settled in the church as may be most agreeable to God's Holy Word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland and other Reformed Churches abroad; and for the better effecting hereof, and for the vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the Church of England from all false calumnies and aspersions, it is thought fit and necessary to call an assembly of learned, godly and judicious divines, to consult and advise of such matters and things touching the premises



as shall be proposed unto them by both or either of the Houses of Parliament, and to give their advice and counsel therein to both or either of the said Houses, when and as often as they shall be, thereto required.

In addition to the one hundred and fifty-one members of the Westminster Assembly, appointed by the English Parliament, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, at the request of the English Parliament, appointed Robert Douglass, Samuel Rutherford, Alexander Henderson, Robert Baillie and George Gillespie, ministers; and John, Earl of Cassilis, John Lord Maitland and Sir Archibald Johnston, ruling elders, commissioners to the Westminster Assembly. From the minutes of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, we learn that these commissioners were to "repair to England for the purpose of consulting with the Westminster Assembly in all matters which may further the union of this Island in one form of church government, one confession of faith, one catechism, and one directory for the worship of God." The Scotch commissioners were not appointed until the 19th of August.

The Westminster Assembly of Divines adjourned on the 22d of February, 1649, having sat five years, six months and twenty-two days. During this time they held one thousand one hundred and sixty-three sessions.

From the ordinances issued by the English Parliament, in connection with the instructions given the Scotch commissioners by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, we are able to learn definitely the object proposed to be effected by the Westminster Assembly. It was simply to reform the Church of England by abolishing unscriptural officers and unscriptural ceremonies. In addition to this, it was the aim of the Scotch commissioners, and probably of some of the other members of the Assembly, to formulate a Scripture form of church government, and a Directory for Worship which would be acceptable to all the Protestants in the world, and thus unite all Protestants in one church. The primary object was to unite England, Ireland and Scotland in one ecclesiastical organization; the ultimate design was to draw the line of demarcation clear and distinct between Protestantism and Popery.

At that time the Church of England, whatever it may be at present, was simply a slightly—and but slightly—modified form of popery. It took its origin, no matter how much de-



nied, in the lust and brutal passions of Henry the VIII. In popery proper, the Pope is the head of the church, and the church is head of the state; consequently, the Pope is head of both church and state. The channel of his universal dominion flows through the church to all things secular. In the Church of England, as originally established, Henry VIII., who styled himself supreme head of the church and defender of the faith, was head of the state; the state was head of the church; and consequently, the King of England was head of both church and state. His dominion was designed to be absolute and over all things, both sacred and secular. The channel through which this universal empire flowed was first through the State; then over all things sacred. In the Papal Church, the Pope usurps the prerogative of Jesus Christ. In the Church of England Henry VIII. usurped the prerogative of the Pope. In few words, the Church of England, during the reign of Henry VIII., and his successors, was a strange commingling of Protestantism and Popery. During the time of Edward VI. Protestantism predominated; in the time of Mary, commonly known as Bloody Mary, Popery in its worst form prevailed; in the time of Elizabeth a deformed Protestantism again prevailed, and continued until Charles I. came to the throne. Then Popery was again revived. We are not to conclude that the Protestantism, which had at least a recognized existence in England for a period of over one hundred years, was genuine anti-Popery Protestantism. It was Protestantism disgraced, disfigured, deformed and polluted by Popish ceremonies and Popish rites. The form of church government was modeled after that of the hierarchy of Rome. Its feast-days and its fast-days were the same as those in the Papal Church. The Prayer Book was but a revised edition of the Mass Book. The church was governed by a horde of officers, the names of not one of which is found in the Bible, and the offices which they pretended to fill have not the shadow of a sanction by the King and Head of the Church.

It was to rid the Church of England of these unscriptural appendages and to bring it in doctrine, in form of government and in the mode of worship, to conform to the Scriptures, that the Westminster Assembly was called. The Scotch Commis-



sioners, in addition to the above, labored to have but one church in England, Ireland and Scotland, with the intention of extending it to all the nations of the earth.

After more than five years of hard work they produced what is known as the Westminster Confession of Faith. It consists of a Confession of Faith proper; of a Form of Church Government; of a Directory for the Public Worship of God; and of the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter. In addition to this, the Westminster Confession of Faith contains the Solemn League and Covenant for the Reformation and Defense of Religion. This Solemn League and Covenant was approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and by both Houses of Parliament and subscribed by them in 1743, and afterwards by all ranks and classes of people in both England and Scotland.

The Solemn League and Covenant was nothing more than a solemn engagement on the part of those who signed it, that they would make all lawful endeavors and use all lawful means to promote the reformed religion in England, Ireland and Scotland; and to accomplish this, they would, without respect to persons, endeavor to effect the "extirpation of popery, prelacy (that is, church government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors, commissaries, deans and chapters, arch-deacons and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy), superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found to be contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness"

It will be seen that in the Solemn League and Covenant the subscribers bound themselves to do the identical thing for which the English Parliament called the Westminster Assembly. The league was between England, Ireland and Scotland, and could not be binding upon any other parties.

The Solemn League and Covenant was drawn up by Alexander Henderson. It received the name Solemn League and Covenant at the suggestion of Sir Henry Vane, that it might be satisfactory both to the English and the Scotch. The contest in which the English were engaged at the time was of a civil character. Hence, they desired to be united with the Scotch in a civil league. The contest in which the Scotch were engaged was of a religious character. Hence, they de-



sired to be united with the English in a religious covenant. The league in which they bound themselves was both civil and religious, and hence called THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT. King Charles I. issued a proclamation, in which he said the Solemn League and Covenant is "nothing else but a traitorous and seditious combination against us and the established religion of this kingdom." Had he substituted for the words "traitorous" and "seditious," *open* and *righteous*, and omitted the pronoun referring to himself, he would have given utterance to the simple truth. The sentence would then have read thus: "The Solemn League and Covenant is nothing else but an open and righteous combination against the established religion of this kingdom." The Covenanters, that is, those intelligently signing the Solemn League and Covenant, were opposed to the established religion of England, because they regarded that religion as opposed to the religion of Jesus Christ and subversive of His Kingdom.

The Westminster Confession of Faith consists of thirty-three short chapters. In these all the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion are concisely and clearly formulated. They treat of the existence and attributes of God; of the Trinity; of creation and providence; and of man in his estate of innocency, and in his lost and ruined state. The doctrine of the atonement; of Christ the Redeemer; of the Holy Spirit, the sanctifier; of man in a redeemed state, and of man in a state of glory, is clearly and forcibly set forth in this Confession. Of the doctrines of this Confession of Faith it may be said that they are in direct opposition to all "Deistical, Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Neonomian and sectarian doctrines."

The form of church government laid down in the Westminster Confession of Faith is Presbyterianism in opposition to prelacy on the one hand, and Independency on the other. The Directory for Worship is simple, and claims to be rigidly in accordance with the Scriptures. According to this Directory, God is a spirit, and those who would worship Him acceptably must worship Him as a spirit and in the way which He has appointed in His word, and in no other way. The pretended worshipping of God through or by images, and the introducing into the worship of God anything not expressly enjoined in His Word is discountenanced and regarded as a sin.



The Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are simply the truths taught in the Confession proper, reduced to the form of questions and answers; the Shorter being adapted, as the assembly thought, to the capacity of children and those just beginning to study the principles of the Christian religion, and the Larger being better fitted for those who have made some advancement in these studies.

Such is a brief outline of the Westminster Confession of Faith. It is not the work of inspired men; but it is the work of men who were required, on oath, to set down nothing in doctrine which they did not believe, and which they could not show to be either plainly taught in the Scriptures, or agreeable to the general teachings of the Scriptures. It would not be extravagant to say that every word in every sentence in the Westminster Confession of Faith was subjected to the severest criticism. Nothing was taken for granted; nothing was done hastily. This is true respecting the doctrines, the form of church government, and the directory for church worship. It is what it is by the invincible power which is in truth. It has been abused and ridiculed, hated and despised, misrepresented and misquoted; but with a few minor exceptions, no one has ever been able to show that there is a single thing taught in the Westminster Confession of Faith which is not taught in the Bible.

#### STANDARDS OF THE ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCH.

This Confession of Faith; Catechisms, Larger and Shorter; Form of Church Government; and Directory for Church Worship, the Associate Reformed Church, at its organization, adopted, with the exception of Section IV. of Chapter 20; Section III. of Chapter 23; and Section II. of Chapter 31.

That the reader may be able to form a correct opinion of the changes made in these sections, they are quoted below as they stand in the Westminster Confession, and then as amended and adopted by the Associate Reformed Church:

SEC. IV., CHAPTER 20—WESTMINSTER CONFESSION.—And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such



practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate.

ASSOCIATE REFORMED CONFESSION.—And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God, and for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, conversation or the order which Christ hath established in His church, they may be lawfully called to account and proceeded against by the censures of the church; and in proportion as their erroneous opinions or practices, either in their own nature or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace of the church and of civil society, they may be also proceeded against by the power of the civil magistrate.

SEC. III., CHAPTER 23—WESTMINSTER CONFESSION.—The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; Yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church; that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed; all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed. For the better effecting whereof he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.

ASSOCIATE REFORMED CONFESSION.—The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and the sacraments, or the power of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; Yet, as the gospel revelation lays indispensable obligations upon all classes of people who are favored with it, magistrates, as such, are bound to execute their respective offices in a subserviency thereunto, administering government on Christian principles, and ruling in the fear of God, according to the directions of His Word, as those who shall give an account to the Lord Jesus whom God hath appointed to be the Judge of the world.

Hence magistrates, as such, in a Christian country, are bound to promote the Christian religion as the most valuable interest of their subjects, by all such means as are not inconsistent with civil rights; and do not imply an interference with the policy of the Church, which is the free and independent Kingdom of the Redeemer, nor an assumption of dominion over conscience.

SEC. II., CHAPTER 31—WESTMINSTER CONFESSION.—As magistrates may lawfully call a synod of ministers and other fit persons to conduct and advise with about matters of religion, so if magistrates be open enemies to the Church, the



ministers of Christ, of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they, with other fit persons upon delegation from their churches, may meet together in such assemblies.

ASSOCIATE REFORMED CONFESSION.—The ministers of Christ, of themselves, and by virtue of their office, or they with other fit persons, upon delegation from their churches, have the exclusive right to appoint, adjourn or dissolve such synods or councils. Though in extraordinary cases it may be proper for magistrates to desire the calling of a synod of ministers and other fit persons, to consult and advise with about matters of religion, and in such cases it is the duty of churches to comply with their desire.

When the Associate Reformed Church was organized, the three Sections of the Westminster Confession of Faith, quoted above, were “reserved for a candid discussion on some future occasion, as God shall be pleased to direct.” As opportunity was afforded, they were candidly discussed, in private and in public, for a period of more than sixteen years; and having been altered so as to make them conform to the Word of God, were adopted on the 31st day of May, 1799.

It will be readily discovered that the three Sections of the Westminster Confession of Faith which were altered by the Associate Reformed Church all treat of the prerogatives of the civil magistrate. According to the teachings of these Sections, in the Westminster Confession, the civil magistrate has the right to call synods, to be present at them as a director of their deliberations, to suppress heresies, and punish those who do not conform to the rules and regulations of the church. This is Erastian doctrine. It renders to Cæsar the things that are God’s.

It is not to be wondered at that some traces of Erastianism are to be found in the Westminster Confession of Faith. The wonder is that there are so few. There are traces of Popery in the English translation of the Bible which all English-speaking Christians have been using for more than two hundred and fifty years. Neither is this to be wondered at. The preceding ages were prolific in saints and festivals, and it is not strange that the translators of the Bible would affix the title “Saint” to the Apostles and convert the Passover into “Easter.”

During the period in which the Westminster Confession of Faith was prepared, Erastianism was making fearful havoc in the church. Erastian notions were wide spread and deeply rooted in the popular mind. Perhaps the most learned man



in that Assembly was a thorough Erastian. The wonder, then, is that only parts of three Sections of the Westminster Confession of Faith even savor of Erastianism. It has been denied that these three Sections, when rightly interpreted, favor Erastianism. This opinion, however, seems to be indefensible. The fathers of the Associate Reformed Church thought that these three Sections granted the civil magistrate rights and prerogatives, on account of his office, which the King and Head of the Church does not grant him. For this reason they changed these Sections, and thus made, as they thought, and none deny, the church free from all dependence upon the state in all matters pertaining to government and discipline.

#### STANDARDS OF THE ASSOCIATE REFORMED SYNOD OF THE SOUTH.

The Associate Reformed Synod of the South, at the very beginning of its separate existence, as we have seen, adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith as it was adopted by the original Associate Reformed Synod, in 1799. To speak more correctly, the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas declared, at the moment of its separation from the General Synod, that they would "adhere to the Constitution and Standards of the Associate Reformed Church in that sense in which they were received when adopted at Greencastle, in the year 1799, and uniformly acted upon until the year 1811."

This was the resolution offered by Messrs. Hemphill and Blackstock, and adopted *unanimously* by the Synod. From this resolution we are enabled to learn what was the doctrinal basis of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. In addition to this, we also learn its form of church government and its directory for worship. We are also enabled to infer what was the main reason inducing the Synod to seek a separation from the General Synod.

With regard to the last fact, it may be said that among many of the present day, mistaken notions are entertained both by those who are members of the Associate Reformed Church and by those who are not members of it. It is the opinion of some in the Associate Reformed Synod of the South that the separation from the General Synod was on account of slavery. Such a conclusion is without a shadow of foundation. In 1822, the



time of the separation, the Associate Reformed people of the South were by no means the advocates of the institution of slavery. In fact, a very large number of them were decidedly opposed to it. Only a few of them were at that time slaveholders, and the probability is that had the question been submitted to the Associate Reformed people—ministers, elders and laymen—slavery would have been voted out of the country by an overwhelming majority. Mr. Hemphill, the mover of the resolution, and nearly all the people of his charge, were, in 1822, far from being the advocates of slavery. Mr. Hemphill lived and died opposed to slavery, and not a single one of the fathers of the Associate Reformed Church in the South were the advocates of the institution. In addition to this, the subject of slavery had at this time never been formally introduced into the Associate Reformed Church. No memorial, petition, or anything of the kind concerning slavery, was ever presented to the General Synod. Slavery, no matter how much it may have, in after years, estranged the people of the two great sections of the United States, had nothing whatever to do in the withdrawal of the Synod of the Carolinas from the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church.

The name which the Synod took to itself, on becoming independent, might possibly, to a stranger, suggest this—the word *South* having become, in after years, a synonym for slavery, and North for anti-slavery—but the conclusion would be unwarranted by the facts in the case. In the petition which the Synod of the Carolinas sent up to the General Synod, it is stated that their “great distance from the place of the meeting of the General Synod made it altogether impracticable for them to maintain a full representation.” This was one reason why they desired their connection with the General Synod dissolved. They also state that “it is supposed that the interests of truth and godliness may be promoted, by them, as successfully in a state of separation from the General Synod.”

From neither the first nor the second reason, nor from both together, are we able to do more than infer the true cause of their desiring to be separated from the General Synod. It is true, the distance from the nearest member of the Synod of the Carolinas and the city of Philadelphia—the place at which the General Synod usually met—was more than four hundred miles,



and that it was difficult, if not impossible, to maintain a full representation in the General Synod at so great a distance. Still, this was no sufficient reason to warrant them in asking for a separation, if everything else had been agreeable. In fact, if everything else had been as they desired it to be, they never would have asked for a separation; and had they asked it, the General Synod would not have granted it. Such a request would have been schismatical, and the granting of it would have been encouraging schism.

### REAL CAUSE OF SEPARATION.

From the resolution offered by Messrs. Hemphill and Blackstock, we are enabled to discover the true and only reason which prompted the Synod of the Carolinas to ask the General Synod for permission to resolve themselves into an independent, coördinate Synod. The following is the resolution:

*Resolved*, That this Synod be hereafter known by the name of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South—adhering to the Constitution and Standards of the Associate Reformed Church, in that sense in which they were received when adopted at Greencastle, in the year 1799. and uniformly acted upon until the year 1811.

The last clause, beginning with the word “adhering,” is significant. It is the key which unlocks the whole mystery. To those who are acquainted with the history of the Associate Reformed Church during the ten years preceding 1821, the language of this part of the resolution is more than an intimation that since the year 1811, the Constitution and Standards of the Church had not been universally adhered to in the sense in which they were understood when adopted, in 1799. So far as the truth of history is concerned, it makes no sort of difference whether they were correct in their conclusion with regard to the sense in which the Constitution and Standards of the Associate Reformed Church were understood, when adopted, or not. They certainly believed that a portion of the Associate Reformed Church had, in their practice, departed from these Standards, and despairing of ever being able to bring that party back to the Standards in practice, they desired to be separated from them.

In this opinion the Synod of the Carolinas was not singular. The Synod of Scioto, and the Synod of New York, and a part of the Synod of Pennsylvania, entertained similar notions on



this subject. In 1819 the Synod of Scioto resolved to withdraw from the General Synod and constitute itself as an independent Synod, "adhering to the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Form of Church Government and Directory for Worship as received at Greencastle, Pa., on the 31st of May, 1799." The Synod of New York, although it did not withdraw from the General Synod, still its connection with that court from 1810 to its final dissolution was merely nominal, or rather one of studied indifference. In fact, it never met from 1812 to 1822, and the pastors virtually neglected everything in connection with the denomination except what concerned their own immediate congregations.

This state of things was brought about by a diversity of views concerning COMMUNION and PSALMODY. These two subjects have no necessary connection; but they became, in all the controversies of the Associate Reformed Church, inseparably connected. The difficulty began with Rev. Messrs. John M. Mason, John X. Clark and James M. Matthews, in 1811. As all that was thought necessary to be said about that difficulty has been elsewhere narrated, it need not be repeated here, further than to say that it served as the beginning of a series of misunderstandings which terminated in the withdrawal of the Synods of Scioto and of the Carolinas, and the ignominious destruction of the General Synod itself.

It may be mentioned that at a very early period in the history of the General Synod, it began to be suspected by a number of persons that there was a tendency to centralize the power of the denomination. This was soon demonstrated to be true beyond a doubt. The General Synod refused to meet elsewhere than in the city of Philadelphia, and in 1810, the General Synod, by a formal Act, "intermitted the functions of the subordinate Synods." This masterly stroke of worldly wisdom paralyzed the church, and completed the centralization. The result was that the Synods of Scioto and of the Carolinas were ever afterward poorly represented in the General Synod.

It was further suspected that the city pastors looked down with a disdainful air upon their co-presbyters from the rural districts. It is to be hoped this was only a groundless suspicion; but we must remember men are but men. If such was the case, it was certainly true, at least in some instances, that pride preceded a grievous fall.



## SUBJECTS OF CONTROVERSY.

The subjects, and the only subjects about which there was any dispute between the parties, were, as already mentioned, Psalmody and Communion. The Synod of the Carolinas left the General Synod because the General Synod had departed, as was thought, from the Constitution and Standards of the Associate Reformed Church in the matter of Communion and Psalmody.

## COMMUNION.

The communion about which the parties disagreed and finally separated was restricted mainly to what may be appropriately denominated sacramental communion. One party held that in the administering of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the privilege of communing was to be restricted, in ordinary cases, to the members of the Associate Reformed Church in good and regular standing. This was properly called a regulated, occasional or restricted communion. The opposite party held that the privilege of communion might be extended, on all occasions, to members of other Christian denominations who regarded themselves in good standing. This was called the unrestricted or catholic communion scheme.

It is the province of the theologian, and not of the historian, to determine which one of these practices, or whether either, is in accordance with the teachings of the Scriptures. All that devolves upon the historian is to show which one, if either, of these practices, was in harmony with the early practices and Standards of the Associate Reformed Church. It is believed that an honest examination of these Standards, as received by the Associate Reformed Church, will convince any one that they favor neither absolutely restricted communion nor catholic communion, but a communion consistent with purity of doctrine and Scriptural discipline. This, it may be remarked, is the only plan that harmonizes with the Testimony of the first Seceders.

The doctrine of the Associate Reformed Church on the subject of the Communion of Saints is contained in the XXVIth Chapter of the Confession of Faith. It is as follows:

1. All saints that are united to Jesus Christ their head, by his Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with Him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection and glory. And being united to one another in love, they have communion in each



other's gifts and graces and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

2. Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual service as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

3. This communion, which the saints have with Christ, doth not make them in anywise partakers of the substance of his Godhead, or to be equal with Christ in any respect; either of which to affirm is impious and blasphemous. Nor doth their communion one with another, as saints, take away or infringe the title or property which each man hath in his goods and possessions.

The word "communion," as used in this section of the Confession of Faith, has no special reference to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Its proper meaning, as used by the Westminster divines and adopted by the Associate Reformed fathers, is those things which are common to Christians. The XXVIth Chapter of the Confession designedly treats of those things which are common to the church. In the XXVth Chapter of the Confession of Faith we are told what is meant by the word "church." It is not a system of laws, but a multitude of individuals to whom God has given a system of laws. The church is two-fold, and each is catholic or universal. There is an invisible church and a visible church. The invisible church, according to the Confession of Faith, "consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are or shall be, gathered into one under Christ the Head thereof." "The visible church consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children."

No unprejudiced mind will come to any other conclusion than that the XXVth Chapter of the Confession of Faith teaches that there is one, and only one, visible church, and that the XXVIth Chapter of the same Confession of Faith teaches that whatever rights and privileges one member of the visible church is entitled to, all the members of the visible church are entitled to. This is not only the doctrine of the Confession of Faith, but it is the doctrine of the Bible, and so the framers of the Confession of Faith thought.

The conclusion, then, to which we are forced is that the Confession of Faith teaches the doctrine of catholic communion,



and that most emphatically. This it was designed to teach, in order that it might be Presbyterian in all its features, and Independent in none.

It must be remembered that this catholic communion which is so clearly and so positively taught in the XXVIth Chapter of the Confession of Faith is not designed to be restricted to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but embraces all social and spiritual services which tend to procure and further the wealth and outward estate of others and also their spiritual growth. The fathers of the Associate Reformed Church admitted this. They were obliged to admit it, or deny that the Confession of Faith was what its framers designed it to be, and what they claimed it actually was—a Presbyterian Confession of Faith suited and actually designed for all Protestants in every part of the world. In this sense the first Seceders understood the XXVIth Article of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Hence Rev. Ralph Erskine said, in 1737, when he withdrew from the Established Church of Scotland and joined the Associate Presbytery: "By withdrawing from these judicatories at present, and joining the said brethren, I intend and understand no withdrawing from ministerial communion with any of the godly ministers of this National Church." So thought all the other members of the Associate Presbytery. They could have entertained no other notions without having admitted that they had set about in a regularly organized form to propagate schism.

The primary object, as has been elsewhere stated, designed to be effected by the Westminster Assembly, was to free the Church of England from a prelatie hierarchy, and unite England, Ireland and Scotland in one form of church government. The ultimate object was to unite all the Protestants in the world in one church, having one form of church government, one directory for worship, and one confession of faith. In doctrine, in form of government and directory for worship, this church was designed to conform rigidly to the Scriptures.

Every one who takes the Bible for his guide, in all matters of faith and practice, must admit that the object had in view by the Westminster Assembly was eminently praiseworthy. It must be remembered, however, that while the primary object had in view by the framers of the Westminster Confession



of Faith was to free the Church of England from prelacy, unite England, Ireland and Scotland in one church, and ultimately to unite all Protestants in all parts of the world in one church, having one confession of faith, one form of church government, one directory for worship, neither the primary nor the ultimate object was effected.

Notwithstanding this was the case, the fathers of the Associate Reformed Church adopted the XXVIth Chapter of the Confession of Faith in the same sense that it was understood by its framers, and in the same sense that it was adopted by the Church of Scotland. Since, however, this Confession of Faith was not adopted, as was expected, by all, and since the visible church is rent into numberless divisions and sub-divisions, each claiming to be the true Church of God, the Associate Reformed Church concluded that catholic communion was, under such circumstances, impracticable, unless they would accept the notion that one system of doctrine, and one form of church government and one directory for worship is just as good as another. Or, more correctly, they regarded catholic communion, in the present divided state of the church, as impracticable, unless they would first conclude that there is no form of church government and no directory for worship either laid down in the Bible or deducible from it, and that Unitarian, Trinitarian, Socinian, Pelagian, Arminian, Sectarian and Calvinistic systems of doctrine are things about which men may wrangle, but which in reality are matters of no importance.

These concessions the Associate Reformed fathers could not make and be honest. Consequently they rejected catholic communion simply as impracticable in the present divided state of the church.

They also rejected that absolutely exclusive theory which unchurches all except those who hold it. They avoided both extremes and wisely chose what was regarded as the true Scripture ground.

These statements and conclusions it is proposed to substantiate by quotations from the authoritative deliverances of the Associate Reformed Church.

Previous to the union which resulted in the organization of the Associate Reformed Church, Rev. John Mason, father of



Dr. John M. Mason, presented to the conference a paper consisting of eight Articles. This was designed to subserve the purpose of a temporary constitution until the reserved chapters had undergone "a candid discussion," were amended and adopted; and it was also declared to be a "proper display of the principles upon which we (the Associate Reformed Church) intend to act." As such, this paper was agreed upon by the Convention, and as such it was adopted without a dissenting vote by the Associate Reformed Synod when organized. It may be proper to remark in this place that on the adoption of the Confession of Faith, in 1799, the "Little Constitution," or the eight Articles contained in the paper presented by Mr. Mason and adopted in 1782, were not repealed, but still remained as the Standards of the Church, since they explained the sense in which the several doctrines of the Confession of Faith were understood.

It is to these and to an Overture published by the Synod in 1787, and to an Act of the Synod in 1790, that the Synods of the Carolinas and Scioto refer when they say that they will "adhere to the Confession of Faith in the SENSE in which it was understood when adopted in 1799."

Taking it for granted that the XXVIth Chapter of the Confession of Faith taught the doctrine of catholic communion, they did not adopt it with the expectation of practicing it in its literal and wider sense, but in the sense which they express in the VIIth Article of the "Little Constitution," which is as follows:

The members of this Synod also acknowledge it to be their duty to treat pious persons of other denominations with great tenderness. They are willing, as God affordeth opportunity, to extend communion to all who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus in conformity to His will. But as occasional communion, in a divided state of the church, may produce great disorders, if it be not conducted with much wisdom and moderation, they esteem themselves, and the people under their inspection, inviolably bound, in all ordinary cases, to submit to every restriction of their liberty which general edification renders necessary.

The reader must not conclude that the word "communion," as it occurs in the Little Constitution, nor as it occurs in the XXVIth Chapter of the Confession of Faith, is used in that restricted and narrow sense in which it is at present frequently used to mean the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It was understood by those who adopted the "Little Constitution" to



embrace everything that is meant by the word "worship." As dispensing and receiving the Lord's Supper may be classed under the head of worship, the communion mentioned in this Article of the "Little Constitution" includes the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, together with many other things. It is clear from this Article that the members of the Associate Reformed Church were held inviolably bound to restrict their liberty in the matter of communion, so far as was consistent with general edification. The reason given is plain, and we may add, charitable. They do not say that the Westminster Confession of Faith, which they had adopted, teaches restricted communion; neither do they say, as some others say, and as it has often been said they say, that all other denominations are synagogues of Satan, but they simply say: "Occasional communion, in a divided state of the church, may produce great disorders." The Article itself, they further say, "is not to be construed as a license to encourage vagrant preachers who go about under pretense of extraordinary zeal and devotion, and are not subject to the government and discipline of any regular church." The reference here is to ministerial communion. To the whole Article a foot-note was added, in which it is declared that, "The principle expressed in this Article is not a new principle adopted by the Synod. It is one of the received principles adopted by the Secession, and it is set in a very strong light in the XXVIth Chapter of the Confession of Faith. No objection, therefore, can be justly stated against it as it stands in the Article, but what may be made to it as it stands in the Confession of Faith. The application of the principle to particular cases may, indeed, be attended with some difficulties, as they arise from the divided state of the church of Christ. The Article is guarded, and cannot, without the most evident perversion, be construed as a license to hold unscriptural communion with other churches."

We will next quote from the "Overture," as it was called. The Overture is an "Exposition and Defense of the Westminster Assembly's Confession of Faith." It is mainly the production of Rev. Robert Anman, and was laid before the Synod and by them unanimously declared, in 1790, to be "in substance an excellent and instructive illustration and application of these truths unto the present state of the church of Christ



in America. And the Synod recommend it as such to all the people under their inspection." It may further be remarked that in this "Overture" the Chapters of the Confession are taken up *seriatim*, and of each an exposition is given. The exposition of the XXVIth Chapter is long; but as it is by no means a dull, prosy production, it is quoted entire, rather than run the risk of marring its beauty, or of conveying an improper idea of its import. It is as follows:

### OVERTURE.

The twenty-sixth chapter treats of the communion of saints. And the view given us in the preceding chapter of the nature of Christ's church, will instruct us in another question: What ought to be the terms of communion in His church? The word "communion" properly signifies something that is common to a number of persons; and thus it was said of the primitive Christians who were so moved with the love of Christ and of each other, that the love of the world had no place in their hearts; "that they had all things common." The rich freely distributed to the poor, and no man called anything his own, exclusively of others. All true Christians have communion in Christ their head. They have all one God and Father with Him. "I ascend," says he, "to my God, and your God; to my Father and your Father." One common inheritance. They are all heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. They have all communion with God the Father, with Christ and with each other in the truth. They all think as Christ thinks, on the great foundation truths of the gospel. They are all taught by the spirit of God, who leads them into all truth; and this communion reaches to the innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven. The church, militant and triumphant, are one in this: there is a blessed harmony between them in the truth; and the strongest bonds of union in a Christian church are the knowledge of the truth, a firm faith in it, love to it and to each other, for the truth's sake. True Christians have all communion in the justifying righteousness and sanctifying spirit of Christ. They are adorned with the same robe of righteousness and drink into one spirit. They are heirs of the same promises and partakers of the same blessings. They eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink; for they all drink of that spiritual rock which follows them; and that rock is Christ. They have one Lord, one faith and one baptism, and are called in one hope of their calling. And it is the duty of Christians to express this communion externally by observing all Christ's institutions in a social manner. These truths cannot be denied; and were it possible to get all true Christians throughout the whole world assembled into one church, while none others were admitted, there would be very little jarring between them; probably none, in the great truths and duties of the gospel. But this is impossible. God hath wisely ordered it otherwise. The tares and the wheat must grow together until the harvest. Christians are the salt of the earth. God hath sprinkled this salt over a great part of the world, in order to season and preserve from total putrefaction the mass of mankind. Differences in the church of Christ, errors and corruptions, spring chiefly from false brethren; formal professors who have a name to live and yet are dead, the former without the power of godliness; the sons of Diotrephes,



who love to have the preëminence; such ever will connect the church with the world, and conform her to it as far as they can. And we must here also allow something to the different capacities of true Christians, their very various advances in knowledge, grace and holiness, and the power of temptation under which they sometimes fall. All these things being considered, we may safely say there is not a perfectly pure church on the face of the earth. The purest is the best, which we ought carefully to seek and embrace, as God gives opportunity. But in nowise must we withdraw from her communion altogether. As is common in other cases, so it is here; we are quick-sighted in discovering the spots and blemishes of other churches; and they are, no doubt, equally so in discerning ours. We cast guilt and blame on others, but no man saith, What have I done? There is an extreme danger of falling under the power of pharisaical ostentation and religious pride in our profession. This was the great sin of the Jewish church in Christ's day, and this sin crucified the Lord of glory. It is natural for us to say, We are the people, and wisdom shall die with us; stand aside, we are holier than you. And there can be no greater evidence of gross hypocrisy, in a religious profession, than when a fondness for pompous and showy titles and pretension overthrows candor, meekness, charity, patience, forbearance and peace.

Taking it for granted, therefore, that it is the duty of Christians to maintain a visible communion with the church of Christ, wherever Providence shall order their lot; that no church is perfectly pure; that it is their duty to seek the purest communion to which they can have access; we shall proceed to point out the terms of communion which in our opinion come nearest to the word of God: on which terms any Christian may safely join in stated fellowship with any branch of the Christian church where Providence may order his lot. They are briefly these: First, that the profession of faith of Christ in said church be full and pure. Secondly, that her worship be Scriptural, all of Christ's ordinances being purely administered. Thirdly, that her discipline and government be according to the word of God, temperate, pure, impartial, peaceful and gentle. Fourthly, that her morals be strictly conformed to the divine rule. Fifthly, that the unity of the spirit be maintained in the bond of peace. All this we maintain with an allowance for the unavoidable weaknesses and infirmities incident to human nature in its present imperfect state. On the same conditions, or materially the same, may any church admit a new member to her communion in a stated way. It is requisite that he have a proper degree of knowledge, be sound in faith, holy in life, and profess a willing subjection to all the ordinances of Christ, particularly to the discipline and government of his house. His continuance in fellowship must depend upon his pure and peaceable deportment. The rulers of the church will find much scope for the exercise of wisdom, prudence, meekness, condescension, charity and patience in this case. They will see the necessity of attending to the various capacities, opportunities, means of improvement, docility of disposition, the different tempers and temptations of Christians; and govern themselves by that wisdom which is profitable to direct. When a person removes from one church to another, it is extremely proper, for the sake of good order, that he produce a testimonial of his soundness in the faith, and holy life.

That a temporary, or what is called occasional communion with sister churches, may lawfully, in some instances, take place, is what no man of understanding who is not much pinched to support some favorite and false hypothesis, will



deny. The terms of it are not materially different from the terms of stated communion, only making an allowance for a variety in innocent customs and forms. There are, doubtless, points of external order in churches which may be called indifferent, such as, whether we begin public worship with prayer or praise; whether, in baptism, we sprinkle once or thrice; whether, in consecrating the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, we pray once or twice; whether we give tokens of admission to the Lord's table or not, if otherwise proper care be taken to guard against an unhallowed communion; and some things may be lawful and expedient in one church which, though lawful, would not be expedient in another. There is also a difference between a church formed and the one only forming; and between a church advancing in reformation and one falling back from former attainments.

By occasional communion we do not mean the admitting to our communion a person whom it would be sinful to continue in it; but a person who, on account of his local circumstances, cannot continue in it. Christians may for months and years be removed from the place of their stated communion. What shall they do in such circumstances? Shall they forsake the assemblies of the saints? Shall they cease to express publicly their love to Christ and His people? Shall they have no visible communion with that branch of the Church of Christ because it happens to be in another part of the world? Shall they cease to give public glory to their Redeemer, and to confess Him before men because they are not at home? Is their God a local deity confined to a particular place, or is His acceptable worship so limited? No. Christians may worship God everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting; and our Confession saith the same thing, Article 3. It is certainly circumscribing the doctrine of the Confession too much to say that the communion here meant, is no more than communion in the common benefits of life, because communion in these may be lawfully extended to Jews, Turks and heathens. "Do good to all men, especially to the household of faith," is a divine precept. And if it be so, as some affirm, that common benefits are not the fruits of Christ's death even to believers, are not benefits of the covenant of grace, are neither applied by the Spirit nor received by faith, it is not easy to see how communion in these alone can be Christian communion which believers have with each other in Christ. It would be an unreasonable extension of the phrase, "With all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus," to make it include all pretenders to Christianity. The phrase is purely Scriptural; and doubtless the apostolic sense, if we could ascertain it, is the true sense. It is quoted from I. Corinthians: 1, 2. It cannot be denied then that the apostle intended such churches as that at Corinth, though several things were imperfect and wrong in it, as will readily appear to any who will read the epistles to that church. The happy medium on this subject, which would neither extend communion too widely, nor circumscribe it too much, the true Scriptural model is that at which we would aim. The mind of Christ we wish to discern and follow. We are far from claiming the prerogatives of the whole catholic body of Christ, to our society, in an exclusive sense. We will not pretend to unchurch all the Protestant churches, or say that their communion is so impure that it would contaminate us to touch, taste or handle it in any case. But while we say so, to guard against the mistake as if we were pleading for a promiscuous or unhallowed communion, let it be observed that this question is not at all concerning the Church of Rome. God has described her as anti-Christian, as totally gone off the foundation, impure in doctrine, idolatrous in



worship, tyrannical on one hand and totally loose on the other, in discipline her government an image of the lordly pride of this world; her morals very impure; she is described as Sodom for filthiness; Babylon, for pride and cruelty; Egypt, for darkness, idolatry and tyranny; His people are commanded to come out of her, that they partake not of her plagues. Nor is the question concerning raving sectarians, who have corrupted some, or perhaps many of the doctrines of the gospel, who have set aside or maimed, added to or diminished the ordinances of Christ. What Christian can favor such opinions as these? The light within, not the Word of God, is the rule of faith and life; that is, men may believe and act just as every man's own mind directs him, without having a regard to any rule or fixed standard. That we must attempt no duty until the Spirit of God moves us thereto, whereas Christ commands us to pray for His Spirit, and the consequence of that opinion is commonly that it leads to a general neglect of many, if not all religious duties. That every one that pleases may commence a teacher in the church of God, or as the Spirit moves him thereto. That there is no Sabbath, no sacraments under the gospel. Nor is the question concerning any church or religious society whatsoever, that would impose any sinful term or terms of communion; or with whom even a temporary communion would involve in a direct or implied apostasy from the testimony of Jesus, and that holy profession of his name to which we have attained. Whenever even a temporary communion would do this, it ought to be avoided.

But the question is, concerning the regular, orderly Protestant churches, who have clearly expressed their orthodoxy in their Confessions of Faith, adhered thereto and walk in the order of the gospel, although differing from us in some external modes and forms. We cannot pretend to unchurch these sister churches, or pronounce their communion unclean, and in all cases improper to be touched. We could not defend such a principle from reason or Scripture, and so will not advance it. We might have said nothing on this offensive subject, as it is to some. We might have concealed our sentiments; but in a public declaration of our principles, we think this would have been uncandid; and we hope tender and humble Christians will not wish that we should advance principles which are not supported by reason, good sense, nor by the Word of God. From these churches we never separated. Our fathers never thought of pronouncing their communion unclean; far less did they ever think of totally rejecting it. Knox held communion with the foreign churches. Welsh, with the Protestant Church of France. Moncrieff, with the Church of Holland, when he studied at Leyden. Renwick received ordination in the Church of Holland. And it is a fact that Rutherford, Henderson, Bailey, etc., held communion with their brethren in England, while they attended the Westminster Assembly. It was with the greatest reluctance that the ministers of the Association first withdrew from the Established Church of Scotland. They did it with holy fear and humility; considered it as an awful and important step; still declared they meant no separation from the Church of Scotland, but from a corrupt party in that church; and they held communion with several ministers of that church for some years after their separation. But now schisms and separations are with many a light matter; they tear and divide in a wanton manner, only to gratify pride, passion and ungodly zeal. May the Lord have mercy on us and give His healing Spirit. We shall only add that submission to the discipline of a church, while we are in her



communion, is indispensably necessary. On the whole, we never can, and never will, embrace the principle that all the Protestant churches, except our own party, are unfit for Christian or holy communion.

## AN ACT TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ASSOCIATE REFORMED SYNOD.

One more quotation will suffice. In the Act of the Synod, in 1797, amending the Confession of Faith, it is stated: "The XXVIth Chapter of the Confession of Faith is understood as opposed not only to bigotry, which at least, by implication, appropriates to a particular denomination the character and privileges of the Catholic Church; but also to the scheme of communion called latitudinarian, which unites all parties of professed Christians in the fullest communion, on the footing only of those general principles that some distinguish by the name of *essentials*; a scheme which is condemned as subservient of the design of this and every other stated Confession of Faith, and as having a natural tendency to promote error and to extinguish zeal for many important truths of the gospel, and consequently they (the Synod) do not consider themselves at liberty to hold organical communion with any denomination of Christians, that is inconsistent with a faithful and *pointed* testimony for any revealed truth, respecting doctrine, worship, discipline and church government."

The conclusion to which we are forced to come, from these authoritative documents, is, that in theory the Associate Reformed fathers believed in the doctrine of catholic communion, and in this sense did they understand the XXVIth Chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Since, however, the church of God is in a divided state, they held that catholic communion could not, without great danger, be practiced. Hence, on the ground of *expediency*, they believed that they were "inviolably bound" to confine the privilege of communion to the members of the Associate Reformed Church, except in extraordinary cases. The doctrine that organic union is absolutely necessary, in order that there may be communion among Christians in the ordinances of God's house, was held by neither the first Seceders, nor by the Associate Reformed fathers. Notwithstanding the fact that the Standards of the Associate Reformed Church did admit of occasional communion on extra-



ordinary occasions, it was never, or very rarely, practiced until 1810. Previous to this time the practice of the church was more conservative than its Standards. This is easily accounted for. Outside of her own members the Associate Reformed Church had few friends and many enemies.

In 1810 occasional communion, on an extraordinary occasion, was introduced by Rev. Dr. John M. Mason. The matter was brought before the highest judicatory of the church, and Dr. Mason was not censured. This action of the General Synod was interpreted by the Synods of the Carolinas and Scioto as a vote of approbation. By some congregations the practice of occasional communion was continued and the restrictions placed upon the XXVth Chapter of the Confession of Faith were practically disregarded. In 1816 Dr. Mason vindicated this course by publishing *A Plea for Sacramental Communion on Catholic Principles*. This drew the dividing line between the parties, on the communion question, clear and distinct, and hastened their organic separation.

The position taken by Dr. Mason, in his *Plea*, is very different from that held by him in 1811. His former position, although novel, was not in glaring conflict with the Standards of the Associate Reformed Church. He was placed under extraordinary circumstances, and what would have been unlawful under ordinary circumstances, would have been in all probability allowed under his peculiar surroundings.

In his *Plea*, however, Dr. Mason advocated a practice which was new, not only in the Associate Reformed Church, but new in all the Presbyterian Churches in the world at that time. It is a historic fact that although the Standards of the Associate Reformed Church have ever allowed, under extraordinary circumstances, a regulated, restricted communion, the practice of the church was, up to 1811, very nearly an absolutely restricted communion. In other words, her practice was higher than her Standards.

About 1811 some members of the Synods of New York and Pennsylvania began to practice what was called latitudinarian communion. This was contrary to the Standards of the church, and this was one of the reasons which led to the withdrawal of the Synods of Scioto and the Carolinas. When the Associate Reformed Synod of the South became independent, it was with



the distinct understanding that the practice of the church respecting communion, previous to 1811, be adhered to. In other words, that communion in the sacraments be restricted, except on extraordinary occasions, to the members of the Associate Reformed Church.

### PSALMODY.

The other cause which led the Synod of the Carolinas to withdraw from the General Synod was the introducing into the worship of God a system of psalmody different from that adopted by the Associate Reformed Church. The law of the church on this point is clear and distinct. It is contained in *The Directory for Public Worship*, Section 3, and is as follows:

1. It is the duty of Christians to praise God publicly, by singing of psalms together with the congregation.

2. It is the will of God, that the sacred songs contained in the Book of Psalms, be sung in His worship, both public and private, to the end of the world; and the rich variety and perfect purity of their matter, the blessing of God upon them in every age, and the edification of the church thence arising, set the propriety of singing them in a convincing light; nor shall any composure, merely human, be sung in any of the Associate Reformed Churches.

The above, with the exception of the last clause, was adopted in 1797. The last clause: "Nor shall any composure, merely human, be sung in any of the Associate Reformed Churches," was afterwards added, tradition says, on the urgent solicitation of Rev. John Hemphill. It matters not particularly by whom it was added. It was certainly in the Article when adopted in 1799, and has, without note or comment, addition or diminution, been the law of the Associate Reformed Church ever since.

The metrical version of the Psalms then in general use, and which was adopted by the Associate Reformed Church, was the Scotch version, popularly but erroneously called Rouse's version. Many, incited by a spirit of willful ignorance or bitter malignity against God's own Word, have ever heralded it to the world that it is Rouse's version of the Psalms and not the Psalms, to which the Associate Reformed Church is wedded. The disseminators of such a gratuitous falsehood are to be pitied rather than despised. Such statements are directly contradicted by the Synod's Act of 1797. In that Act they say:



WHEREAS, The poetical version of the Psalms, commonly called the Psalms of David, which hitherto has been used amongst us, is a safe translation of these Psalms, and has been instrumental in promoting sincere and unaffected devotion; it shall be retained in the congregations under the inspection of this Synod till another version equally safe and acceptable and more adapted to the improved state of the English language shall be prepared.

This is all the fathers of the Associate Reformed Church say about Rouse's version of the Psalms. Had they said less, they would have subjected themselves to the charge of illiterate stupidity while poets continue to be born and not made.

The doctrine of the Associate Reformed Church on psalmody has always been that it is the duty of the church to sing, in the public and private worship of God, the Psalms of the Bible in the best version that can be obtained, and that the church has no authority in God's Word, and, consequently, no authority at all to sing any hymns, in the formal worship of God, that are composed by uninspired men.

This, it is readily admitted, is higher ground than that taken by the Secession fathers; but it is in perfect harmony with the principles laid down in the Westminster Confession of Faith. In the use of any other system of psalmody there is a constant and unavoidable liability to worship God in a way not appointed in his Word. Any and every departure from the principle on psalmody adopted by the Associate Reformed Church is, in its very nature, so far an encroachment upon the primary notion of Presbyterianism, and has a direct tendency to propagate gross errors and perpetuate divisions in the church of God.

This law of the Associate Reformed Church was, by Dr. John M. Mason, violated in 1810. His example was followed by others, to the great grief of not a few.

In 1816 the Synod of the Carolinas sent up a remonstrance to the General Synod. The thing mostly complained of in this remonstrance is the scheme of communion lately introduced by some into the Associate Reformed Church. Nothing can be plainer than that the Synod of the Carolinas desired communion restricted to organic communion, and that "composures merely human" be entirely excluded from the worship of God. Because they could not prevail upon the General Synod to do these two things, they asked and obtained permission to become an independent, coördinate Synod. On becoming a sep-



arate organization, the Associate Reformed Synod of the South repealed no act of the Associate Reformed Church, adopted no new principle, and inaugurated no new practice respecting either psalmody or communion.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

GENERAL SYNOD DISSOLVED soon after the Organization of the Synod of the South—Synods of New York, Scioto and of the South Remain—Their Right to the Theological Library Asserted—Character of the Union Formed by the General Synod with the General Assembly—Gloomy Period in the History of the Associate Reformed Church—Death of Irwin, Rogers, McKnight, Blackstock and Hemphill—Death of Two Theological Students, McJimsey and Boyce—Dr. J. T. Pressley Called to Pittsburgh—Samuel P. Pressley Went to Athens—Missionary Labors of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South—Dr. Cooper, of South Carolina College—Action of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South Concerning Him—His Charges Against Clergymen—Dr. Cooper's Influence—The Part the Associate Reformed Synod Took in His Removal.

On Monday, April the 1st, 1822, the Associate Reformed Synod of the South began its separate existence. Rev. Eleazer Harris was moderator. One month and twenty days after this transaction, the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church, or a part of it, deliberately resolved itself out of existence. Three fragmentary parts of the Associate Reformed Church remained firm to the principles and practices which they had pledged themselves to support. These were the Synods of New York, Scioto and the South. They were widely separated from each other; and although each had pledged its adherence to the same Confession of Faith, form of Church Government and Directory for Worship, each one was independent of the other two. In the property which once belonged to the General Synod they had an equal right. The Synod of Scioto had forfeited its legal claims, by declaring itself independent, before the union was formed. This matter was not forgotten by the Synod of the South. The First Presbytery, in its annual report to the Synod, recommended that:

"In the event the contemplated union of the Northern Synods (those of New York and Pennsylvania) with the General Assembly be effected, that the proper steps be taken by the Synod of the Carolinas to secure a due portion of the theological library of the Associate Reformed Church."



This matter was duly considered by the Synod of the South. On the second day of its first meeting it was

“*Resolved*, That the Rev. John T. Pressley be, and he hereby is, directed to notify the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of our claim in the theological library of the Associate Reformed Church; and that, in the issue of the transfer of the same to the seminary at Princeton, we will not relinquish our right, unless absolutely compelled.”

In addition to the above, the following resolution, adopted by the unanimous voice of the Synod, was sent to the General Synod:

“*Resolved*, That the Rev. J. T. Pressley be, and he hereby is, directed to assert, in the letter to the General Synod, our claim in the theological library of our church; and that we do, therefore, protest against a transfer of it to the theological seminary at Princeton.”

The Synod of the South, it is evident, took it for granted that “the contemplated union” would be effected. In this they were not mistaken. Events had been drifting in that direction so long and the current was so strong, that they wisely concluded it could not be successfully resisted. They were wrong, however, as the event showed, in concluding that the Synod of New York would go into the union. This it did not do.

The union was, by an act of high handed ecclesiastical tyranny, effected; the theological library was transferred in stealthy haste to Princeton, and was, after many long years of vexatious litigation, surrendered to the Synod of New York in 1837; but the Associate Reformed Synod of the South neither asked for nor received any part of it.

From 1822 to the founding of Erskine College, was, on account of several reasons, a gloomy period in the history of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. Death, that fell monster, who, in the language of a Latin poet, “knocks impartially at the door of the poor man’s hut and at the palace of the great,” began his work. In 1824 Rev. Robert Irwin died, and in less than two years, beginning with August the 21st, 1830, James Rogers, James McKnight, William Blackstock and John Hemphill were taken away from the scenes of their earthly labors to their eternal reward. Two students of theology—John McJimsey and James S. Boyce, both having nearly completed their theological course—were stricken down, the



former in the fall of 1828 and the latter in the fall of 1829. In 1831, Rev., afterward Dr., John T. Pressley went to Pittsburgh as professor of theology in the seminary, but recently established in that city, and shortly afterward Rev. Samuel P. Pressley went to Georgia as professor in the college at Athens.

These were truly dark days, but ministers and people seem to have clung together with a firmness and steadiness which is truly wonderful. If any one was disheartened he never made it known. Each in his station was faithful unto death.

One of the features of the Associate Reformed Church is that it has always been a missionary church. Those old men, Blackstock and Grier, rode on several occasions over Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky, preaching the gospel to the people in connection with the Associate Reformed Church in these States.

These missionary efforts began at a very early period in the history of the Synod. In 1819 Rev. John T. Pressley, by direction of the Synod, spent two months in laboring among the scattered vacancies in Georgia and Alabama. In his report to Synod he stated that he had rode more than nine hundred miles and preached on every alternate day.

In 1822, Rev. Isaac Grier spent three months, and Rev. William Blackstock three and one-half months as missionaries in the West. The labors of Mr. Grier were confined to the settlements in Georgia and Alabama, while those of Mr. Blackstock extended as far as Obion county, Tennessee. These missionary tours were repeated annually by some member or members of the Synod. The missionaries, Blackstock, Pressley, Strong, Grier and Harris, traversed over the whole of the territory included in the States of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky. On one of these tours a missionary would ride on horseback, through a country sparsely populated, more than two thousand miles, preach twice on every Sabbath and frequently on week days.

About the year 1822, or perhaps three or four years previous to that date, petitions for preaching began to be sent to the Synod from Obion, Union, Hopewell (Maury county), Prosperity, Bethel, Head Spring, and Hopewell (Lincoln county), Tennessee; and from Nanafalia, Pine Barren, Russell's Valley,



Salem, Tallahassee, Zalmonah, New Ireland, Fair View, Prosperity, Cahawba Settlement, and perhaps a few others in Alabama. In the Cahawba Settlement there were, in 1822, fifty communicants. To these Rev. Isaac Grier preached and administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. All these vacancies, together with those mentioned elsewhere, depended upon the Synod of the South for the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments.

Under the peculiar circumstances the Synod could not supply fully the spiritual wants of these communities. Every effort that mortal men could make was exerted. They wrote to the Synod of the West and to the Associate Synod of Scotland for ministerial assistance, and an effort was made to unite with the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas. No assistance came from Scotland, and a union was not effected with the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas, and but little assistance was received from the Synod of the West.

Prior to 1822 occasionally laborers were sent from the Northern Synods; after that time the Synod of the South was left to struggle unaided, with all its surrounding difficulties. They wrote letters to the vacancies, visited them in person as often as was possible, but in spite of all their efforts, several of these vacancies became disheartened and gradually coalesced with other Christian denominations. Some of them joined the Baptist, some the Methodist; but the larger number united with the Presbyterian Church.

At the time that the Synod of the South began its separate existence, Dr. Thomas Cooper was President of South Carolina College. Dr. Cooper had, in his day, the reputation of being a man of prodigious learning. He was a lawyer, a physician, a chemist, a mineralogist, a geologist and a politician. For a time, he was the idol of the great. It was not long, however, before his influence began to weaken in some sections of the State. The college over which he presided became the scene of great and disgraceful disorders.

Dr. Cooper's learning was certainly very extensive, but it may be doubted whether he was either profound or accurate. He had read much and thought little.



This, however, would have caused no disturbance in the college and produced no want of confidence in him by the people of the State. In addition to the fact that Dr. Cooper had the reputation of being a learned man, it was certainly known that he had no sympathy with the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. His much learning, if such was really the case, had made him mad. He began insidiously to poison the minds of the youth of the country. Many good people became alarmed. The South Carolina College was a State institution, founded by the State and supported by the State. It really belonged to the people of South Carolina. Their money built its halls, furnished its library and apparatus, and supported its professors.

In this institution the people of the State felt a peculiar interest. They could point to its splendid buildings, its fine apparatus and its extensive library with pride. In it they expected their sons to be trained for honorable and useful stations in life. The people of the State were a Christian people, and since the South Carolina College belonged to them they had a right to demand that nothing prejudicial to the Christian religion be taught within its walls. This expectation they did not realize in Dr. Cooper. Adroitly he, by insinuations and innuendoes, poisoned the minds of the youth of the country placed under his care.

It is probable, as is testified by those who were students in the South Carolina College during his connection with it, that Dr. Cooper rarely boldly attacked the Christian religion in the class-room. He was too crafty to do this. By apparently careless remarks and unimportant criticisms he effected his purpose more successfully. That he did make some infidels, no one at all acquainted with the moral or religious history of some of those who waited upon his instruction will doubt.

The people of the State, and especially of the up-country, were struck with astonishment. Among the first, if not the very first, to sound the alarm was the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. In his report to the Legislature in 1822, Dr. Cooper charged the clergymen of the State with all the misfortunes which were befalling the college. The following is his language :

“The most powerful obstacle to the prosperity of this institution is the systematic hostility of the clergy generally, to any seminary of education which is not placed under their government and control.”



This was a grave charge, and one worthy of careful investigation. Surely Dr. Cooper did not expect the Legislature of South Carolina so far to stultify themselves in the eyes of all the civilized nations on earth, as to believe that he uttered the truth? They knew that what he said was false.

Protestant clergymen ever have been the fosterers of institutions of learning, and they have never claimed that it was their sole prerogative to govern and control these institutions. It is true that there have been but few institutions of any note in which clergymen have had no control.

At its meeting in April, 1823, the Associate Reformed Synod of the South prepared and ordered to be published in one of the weekly papers of the State an address to the people of the State. In this address they deny that the ministers of the gospel are opposed to the College of South Carolina, and appeal from the "illiberal, unrighteous and sweeping charge of the learned president against the ministers of reconciliation, to the candor and good sense of the Christian commonwealth." Soon after this a controversy sprung up between Dr. Cooper and a minister of the Associate Reformed Synod. The people of the State were thoroughly aroused. In December, 1831, the following resolution was introduced into the House of Representatives by a graduate of the South Carolina College, and who afterwards was a minister in the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, viz.:

"*Resolved*, That in the opinion of this House it is expedient that the board of trustees of the South Carolina College do forthwith investigate the conduct of Dr. Cooper, as President of the South Carolina College, and if they find that his continuance in office defeats the ends and aims of the institution, that they be requested to remove him."

The board of trustees of the college found nothing in the charges which were brought against Dr. Cooper, which they thought rendered his continuance in office detrimental to the good of the college. It was not so with the people of the State. Nothing would satisfy the friends of the college but the removal of Dr. Cooper. "The cry of revolution and reorganization was again heard echoing and reëchoing from the mountain to the seaboard." Nothing would satisfy an insulted Christian people but the removal of the man who had dared to stigmatize their religion as a farce. They had hired him to



teach chemistry, but he went out of his way to instill infidel notions into the minds of their children, and nothing would satisfy them but his removal, and he accordingly was removed.

The part which the Associate Reformed Synod took in the matter of removing Dr. Cooper is highly creditable to them as Christian ministers and citizens of the State of South Carolina. It may be said it was a matter with which they were not immediately concerned. This is not even plausible. They were citizens of the State, and the South Carolina College was the Alma Mater of, at least, three of the ministers of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, and of quite a number of her members. The South Carolina College, being a State institution, all the citizens of the State—the humble as well as the high—had an interest in its welfare. Under the administration of Dr. Cooper it had made a fair start to spread infidel notions broadcast over the State.

The influence of Dr. Cooper for evil was certainly very great. His life had been spent in a continuous storm. He seems to have taken a peculiar pleasure in disturbing the peace of every community in which he was thrown, either by accident or business. All his literary and scientific works perished with him. Very few of the present day have ever seen his infidel productions, and no one ever thinks of reading them. In fact they have no merit in them. His fame rested solely on his wonderful powers as a lecturer. He hated all his life the Christian religion, and, perhaps, without designing it, transferred his hatred to those who professed it. In this opposition to Christianity, Dr. Cooper was honest, if such a thing be possible. He thought as he spoke, and spoke as he thought. He was neither a sycophant nor a hypocrite. This made him the more dangerous to the morals of those whom it was his business to instruct. The simple fact that it was known that Dr. Cooper was an infidel, led many a thoughtless young man to weigh anchor and set sail on the ocean of infidel vagaries. Dr. Cooper exhumed errors long buried, paraded before the world their ghastly forms, and polluted society with their noisome stench. Some young men by him were ruined, and the usefulness of others was for years greatly hindered.



The Associate Reformed Synod took an honorable and useful part in vindicating the religion of Jesus Christ, and in preventing the spread of opinions which were calculated to sap the very foundations of society. Had not a prompt and vigorous effort been made by the Christian people of South Carolina in opposition to the false and dangerous opinions held and propagated by Dr. Cooper, no one can safely estimate what would have been the consequences. As it was, the morals of the State were polluted, the spread of the gospel impeded, and it may be, the judgments of God called down upon the land.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WANT OF A COLLEGE Retarded the Growth of the Synod of the South—Students went North to be Educated—Classical Schools Established in the Synod—Theological Professors Appointed—Attempt to Reorganize the General Synod—Letter Sent to the Synods of New York and Scioto—Delegates meet at Pittsburgh, on the 12th of September, 1827—Basis of Union Adopted and sent to the Presbyteries—Disapproved and no Union Formed—Union of the Synods of New York and of the West in 1856—The Subject of Slavery Introduced into the Associate Reformed Synod of the West by Emigrants from the South—Overture from Hopewell, Ohio—Curious Facts in Respect to this Overture—Anti-Slavery Sentiments of Southern Origin—The First Presbytery of Ohio—Its Pastors Born in the South—The Synod of the South Memorialize the Legislature of South Carolina—The People of the United States become Wildly Fanatical on Slavery, Pro and Con—Synod of the South never Ultra on Slavery.

Among the many things which retarded the early growth of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, may be reckoned the want of a college and a theological seminary. The field to be cultivated was sufficient to have employed at least thirty laborers, and there were only about twelve, and one-half of these was becoming burdened with the weight of years. Sixty years ago colleges and theological seminaries were few in the South. By a law of the Associate Reformed Church, which had been rigidly observed since the days of the Erskines, no man could be admitted to preach the gospel who had not completed a classical course of learning in some college or university, and studied theology under some competent instructor for several years. This was the law in all the secession branches of the Church of Scotland, and also in the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

At a very early period classical schools were established by members of the Associate Reformed Church. About the beginning of the present century, Rev. James Rogers opened a classical school at Monticello, Fairfield county, South Carolina. This institution, although neither owned nor controlled entirely by the Associate Reformed Synod, was presided over for more than a quarter of a century by an Associate Reformed



minister and largely patronized by Associate Reformed people. In 1825 a petition was sent to the Synod, praying that the Ebenezer Academy, in York county, be taken under its patronage. This petition the Synod granted. Both of these institutions made for themselves an honorable reputation. They were largely patronized by the adjoining States; and by Rev. James Rogers and Rev. Eleazar Harris were educated a number of young men who became distinguished at the forum, and on the bench, and as governors, physicians and theologians.

Besides these, there were a number of other classical schools within the bounds of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. These all subserved a good purpose, but there was no college in the State of South Carolina which the members of the Associate Reformed Church could conscientiously patronize. This was the case from 1820 to 1830.

During that period, young men in connection with the Associate Reformed Church having the gospel ministry in view, were placed under the necessity of going several hundred miles—some to Jefferson College, and others to Miami University—that they might prepare themselves for their work.

To meet in part the exigencies of their circumstances, the Synod determined, in 1825, to establish a theological seminary. They did not undertake to collect funds for the purpose of fitting up a seminary with all the modern improvements and advantages. They simply adopted a resolution establishing a theological school, with the Rev. John Hemphill, professor of didactic and polemic theology, and the Rev. John T. Pressley, professor of oriental languages, Biblical criticisms and church history.

Under the circumstances, this was, in all probability, the best that the Synod could do. That was a day of small things, and it may be added, strange things. The professors were distant from each other fully one hundred miles. It is clear that the students would be under the necessity of completing one thing at a time. They could not recite on church history and polemic theology on the same day to the professors appointed for these several departments. It is very probable that the work fell mainly upon Mr. Pressley. Mr. Hemphill was an old man, and began to decline rapidly in the course of a few



years. He, for some time, discharged the duties imposed upon him by the church ; but how long, and to what extent is not certainly known.

In 1827, Mr. Hemphill tendered his resignation, which was accepted. From that time to the fall of 1831, Mr. Pressley was "sole teacher of theology," by appointment of the Synod.

In 1826 the Synod resolved that a theological fund be established, and that the members of Synod be directed to make collections in their different congregations for this purpose. Rev. Samuel P. Pressley was appointed treasurer of this fund.

About this time (1825) an effort was made to collect a library for the use of the theological seminary. Some success attended this effort, but how great is not certainly known.

The Synod of the South continued, on all proper occasions, to direct their attention to the recovery of the theological library, transferred from New York to Princeton, at the time of the so-called union of the Associate Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church. To accomplish this, as well as some other ends, the Synod of the South deemed it necessary that the General Synod, which perished in 1822, be reorganized. In 1826, the following resolution was adopted, viz. :

"That an aggregate meeting of the three Synods of the Associate Reformed Church is a most desirable and important object, and that should our sister Synods concur, this meeting be held in the city of Pittsburgh, on the first Monday of September, 1827."

This resolution, together with a letter, prepared by order of Synod by Rev. Samuel P. Pressley and Rev. Isaac Grier, was sent to the Synods of the West and New York. The following is the letter :

DEAR BRETHREN :—Since the year 1822, the Associate Reformed Church in the United States has been in a dismembered state. Its existence as an organized society has scarcely been recognized by those who reckon up the denominations of Christendom. The General Synod, once the common center of motion and attraction, having dissolved, the parts once attracted to and moved by it have moved off in divergent courses. By the above extract you will perceive that this Synod is anxious to collect the disunited parts of our once organized church, to combine whatever of wisdom, prudence and piety, may be in our several Synods, to promote the common salvation of the church and the glory of her Lord.

We cannot, in the compass of a single letter, fully exhibit those reasons which influence this Synod to adopt the above resolution. But a few of them shall be briefly stated.



1. We are of opinion that the library, formerly belonging to our seminary in New York, never can be recovered, unless the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church be reorganized. The body to which this library once belonged does not formally exist; and though its component parts exist, it cannot be treated with until it be reorganized. We are, therefore, of opinion that every consideration which makes it desirable to recover the funds and library of the Associate Reformed Church, urges upon our Synods the necessity of reorganization. And this subject will very properly come before the Convention.

2. The fact that we have so long remained independent and unconnected has been thought to be indication of a want of love and confidence. It has been thought and said that the Associate Reformed Church is extinct, that confidence between its parts is lost, that though its Synods do profess to adhere to the common standards they do not associate upon common principles of like faith and hope. Representations of this kind are unfavorable to the growth and respectability of our church. And in order to show our sympathy and confidence, and to prevent misrepresentation, we plead for the reorganization.

3. Our Church has always insisted upon the necessity of a well educated ministry. On this subject we agree with our fathers. And the want of an approved and well conducted school of the prophets is an affliction to our Synod. The effectiveness and respectability of the church's ministry are intimately connected with the existence of a well regulated theological seminary. To establish and conduct such a seminary, requires the wisdom, influence and wealth of the whole church. Our Synods, in their disunited state, are not adequate to this enterprise. Our Church rose with the rise of our former seminary, nor did the General Synod long survive the suspension of its operations. Let us then reorganize our General Synod, that so our seminary may resume its operations. We say RESUME; for, from the minutes of the General Synod for the year 1821, you will perceive that the operations of the seminary were suspended before the dissolution of the General Synod had taken place. This fact induces us to think that if General Synod were reorganized, and the operations of the seminary were resumed, our library might probably be regained.

Other reasons might be mentioned, but we forbear. Our Synod was unanimous in the above resolution. We cannot express the anxiety which we feel to know the views of our sister Synods on the subject. We claim no prerogatives, but to expedite the matter, we have specified a time and place of meeting, in which we hope our brethren will concur. It is upon the ground of common faith, hope and charity, as also of presbyterial parity, that we propose to meet. We hope you will consider these things in your Synods respectively, and that as soon as may be practicable, you will make us acquainted with the result of your deliberations.

Praying that the Head of the Church may direct you in all your deliberations, and in this business particularly, we subscribe ourselves.

Your brethren,

JOHN RENWICK,

*Moderator.*

The Synod of the West met at Cadiz, Ohio, in April, 1827, and adopted the following resolutions, viz.:



*“Resolved, By Messrs. Graham and Johnson, that we concur with our brethren of the Southern Synod in considering a meeting of delegates from the three Synods of the Associate Reformed Church, in convention, a desirable and most important object.*

*“Resolved, That Messrs. Thomas Smith, Joseph Kerr, David Proudfit, Alexander Porter and William Baldridge, ministers, be appointed delegates to attend the meeting of this kind which has been proposed, and that this meeting be held at Pittsburgh, on the second Monday of September, 1827.”*

The Synod of New York met at Schenectady, in May, 1827, and adopted the following resolutions, viz.:

*“Resolved, That this Synod receive, with much respect and affection, the friendly communications from our sister Synods of the South and West.*

*“Resolved, That this Synod will, and hereby do, appoint two delegates, viz.: The Rev. Dr. Alexander Proudfit and the Rev. Donald C. McLaren, to meet with delegates from the South and West at Pittsburgh, on the 12th day of September next.”*

It will be seen from the above resolutions, adopted by the Synods of the West and North, that the proposition for a meeting of the three Associate Reformed Synods apparently met their hearty approval. The plan contemplated by the Synod of the South seems to have been that the ministers of the three Synods meet at Pittsburgh, as a whole; or that, as they say, in the *aggregate*. This plan, for reasons not stated, was changed by the Synod of the West, and a meeting by delegates appointed. The delegates, who were all ministers, were to equal, in the aggregate, the number of presbyteries in the Synods.

At nine o'clock, on the 12th of September, 1827, all the delegates appointed by the Synods of the West, and Rev. John T. Pressley and Rev. Isaac Grier, delegates appointed by the Synod of the South, met at Pittsburgh. At three o'clock of the same day, Rev. Donald C. McLaren and William Nisbet, delegates from the Synod of New York, appeared and took their seats.

The meeting was organized by calling Rev. Alexander Porter to the chair, and appointing Rev. John T. Pressley, secretary.

The object of the Convention being mainly to devise some plan by which the three Associate Reformed Synods might be united, the following preamble and resolution was presented by Rev. Messrs. Pressley and Proudfit, viz.:



WHEREAS, Some visible bond of union among those who are one in faith, is a most important and desirable object; *And whereas*, By a series of unhappy events, the Associate Reformed Church has been thrown into a dismembered condition; *And whereas*, It is believed that the general interest of truth and godliness in the world, and particularly in the Associate Reformed Church, might be efficiently promoted by a union of effort; therefore,

*Resolved*, 1. That in the judgment of this Convention it is expedient that the General Synod be reorganized.

2. That in the reorganizing General Synod, the respective Synods, for our mutual satisfaction, and for the promotion of mutual confidence, solemnly renew our professions of adherence to the Constitution and Standards of this Church, as adopted by the Act of the Associate Reformed Synod, at Greencastle, on the 31st of May, 1799.

*And whereas*, The peace of this Church has, in times past, been greatly interrupted, and her very existence endangered, by the disputes which have existed on the subjects of psalmody and communion; therefore,

*Resolved* 3. That we solemnly renew our profession of adherence to the Act of the General Synod, explanatory of the sense in which the doctrine of this church on these subjects is understood, particularly the Acts of 1790, 1793, 1799 and 1820. Of which Acts the following are extracts :

“An Act to amend the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod,” passed in 1790. The Synod declare that they understand the 26th Chapter of the Confession of Faith. “as opposed not only to bigotry, which, at least by implication, appropriates to a particular denomination of Christians, the character and privilege of the Catholic Church; but also to the scheme of communion called latitudinarian, which unites all parties of professed Christians in the fullest communion, on the footing only of those general principles that some distinguish by the name of essentials; a scheme which they condemn as subversive of the design of this and every other stated confession of faith, and as having a natural tendency to promote error, and extinguish zeal for many important truths of the gospel, and consequently, that they do not consider themselves as left at liberty, by this part of the confession, to hold organical communion with any denomination of Christians, that is inconsistent with a faithful and pointed testimony for any revealed truth respecting doctrine, worship, discipline and church government.”

“An Act concerning psalmody,” passed 1793. “It is the will of God, that the sacred songs of Scripture be used in His worship to the end of the world. The substitution of devotional songs, composed by uninspired men, in the place of these sacred songs, is, therefore, a corruption of the worship of God.”

The Convention took up and discussed each of these resolutions separately. After mature deliberation they were adopted. This Convention held five sessions; passed a number of resolutions bearing upon the general interest of the Associate Reformed Church, and then adjourned. The utmost harmony prevailed from the beginning to the end of the Convention. The prospects for the union of the three Synods were exceedingly encouraging.



The Pittsburgh Convention had no power to consummate the proposed union. It was simply a consultation body. Their proceedings were, however, regularly brought before each of the three Synods at their next regular meeting.

To all human appearances there was nothing which made it incumbent upon either of the Synods to oppose the union, and many things which urged them to hasten its final consummation. They had all adopted literally the same Confession of Faith, Form of Church Government and Directory for Worship. They had adopted it with the same explanations. Their opposition to the proceedings of the General Synod was common. In the recovery of the library of the Associate Reformed Church they had and felt a common interest. No one of the Synods, it would seem, had a desire to be recognized as the Associate Reformed Church, to the exclusion of the other two. In good faith, they addressed each other affectionately, calling each other by the tender name of sister. Under these circumstances it seemed impossible for them to remain in their dismembered condition.

In November, 1827, the Synod of the South "directed Rev. John T. Pressley to inform the Synods of the West and North that this Synod did, at its present meeting consider and approve of all the resolutions adopted by the Convention at Pittsburgh." For various reasons, both the other Synods saw fit to pursue a different course.

The Synod of the West had an overture on slavery laid before it. This was undecided; and for this reason and this alone the Synod of the West was unwilling, at that time, to unite with the Synod of the South. With the Synod of the North the Synod of the West was unwilling to unite, because of the latitudinarian opinions of some of the leading members of the Northern Synod in respect to psalmody and communion. The Synod of the North was unfavorable to the union because it desired to be let alone, and permitted to manage its own affairs in its own way. Thus terminated the effort to reorganize the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church. In this dismembered state the Synods of the West and North remained until the 28th of May, 1856. At that time the Synods of New York, the First and Second of the West, and Illinois united



at Allegheny, Pennsylvania, and organized the *General Synod of North America*. The Synod of the South still maintains her independency.

It is not easy to say with absolute certainty why the basis of union, agreed upon by the Pittsburgh Convention, was practically rejected by the Synods of New York and of the West. There can be no doubt that the Synod of the South was intensely anxious that a union should be effected. The Synod of the West seems to have lost confidence in some of the members of the Synod of New York, or of the North, as it is often called. No doubt there were just grounds for this, but it was certainly not in keeping with the spirit of the gospel to convert an accidental separation into a schism. Some unions may be sinful, but all schisms are sinful. The subject of slavery stood as the ostensible barrier in the way of union between the Synods of the West and the South. Were it not that there are some very curious facts connected with the history of slavery, so far as it has reference to the Associate Reformed Church, the whole subject would be passed over in silence.

Of the subject in its national results, it may be safely said that it was the prime and only cause of one of the most bloody civil wars the Christian world ever witnessed. Of the subject of slavery in general, however, it is not proposed to write. Its history cannot yet be written. The very mention of the subject arouses feelings of bitter animosity. The American people are not yet prepared to believe the truth. A man places his reputation in jeopardy by daring either to write or speak of it in a calm, unbiased manner. The time has scarcely arrived when a man can afford to be sober in his views on this subject. By the clamor of the multitude he is pressed to be ultra on one side or the other.

Discarding slavery in its national aspect, it is proposed to state briefly and dispassionately the origin and result of the slavery controversy in the Associate Reformed Church. No doubt the mass of the people of the United States, both North and South, will stand amazed when it is declared that the sentiment of the Associate Reformed people, both ministers and laymen, in the South, was decidedly anti-slavery from its origin down to about the year 1830. It is a fact that a very large number of the Associate Reformed people in the South



emigrated to the north-west for no other reason than their opposition to slavery. This is true of other Christian denominations, especially of the Covenanters and Associate Presbyterians. This emigration movement began about the close of the last century and continued for about thirty years.

The first time that the subject of slavery was formally introduced into any of the courts of the Associate Reformed Church was in the spring of 1826. At that time an overture was sent up to the Synod of the West by the congregation of Hopewell, Preble county, Ohio. The curious fact connected with this overture was that the congregation from which it came was of Southern origin. Its pastor, the Rev. Alexander Porter, was a native of Abbeville county, South Carolina, and all, or nearly all, the members of the congregation were emigrants from the counties of Chester, Fairfield and Abbeville, S. C. The church in which they worshipped they named Hopewell, in honor of Hopewell, in Chester county, South Carolina. The congregation was simply a colony of Associate Reformed people which had gone, some before their pastor, some about the same time, and some after him, and settled in Ohio. The settlement was begun about 1800, by some families from Hopewell, Chester county, S. C. These were, in subsequent years, joined by other families from the same region. In 1814, the Rev. Alexander Porter, the second pastor of Cedar Spring and Long Cane, became their pastor. These families emigrated from South Carolina on account of their opposition to slavery, and they were the first in the Associate Reformed Church to make an effort for the overthrow of the institution.

This calls up another fact that has long since been practically ignored. It is this: Anti-slavery sentiments first existed in the slave-holding States, and were introduced into, what are known as free States, by Southern men. In the three presbyteries constituting, in 1826, the Synod of the West, only the First Presbytery of Ohio was decidedly in favor of the overture sent up by Hopewell congregation. In this presbytery there were, at the time this overture was under consideration, six pastoral charges. Three of the pastors, Alexander Porter, Samuel P. Magaw and David McDill, were born in South Carolina; another, Joseph Claybaugh, was born in Maryland. John Steele, one of the remaining pastors, had been a



pastor in Kentucky. In addition to this, Samuel C. Baldrige, one of its three students, was born in Rockbridge county, Virginia.

In 1826, the number of communicants in connection with the congregations under the supervision of the First Presbytery of Ohio was about two thousand. Of this number, fully three-fourths were born in the South, or were the sons and daughters of parents who were born there. It was by these that the slavery question was first agitated in the Associate Reformed Church, and they gave the anti-slavery sentiment its first impulse in the denomination to which they belonged. It was by these mainly that the reorganizing of the General Synod was opposed in the Synod of the West.

In connection with this general subject it may be stated that while the Synod of the West was engaged in discussing the overture which was designed to make slavery a term of communion, or which had for its object the excluding slavery from the church, a question very similar in its general aspect was engaging the attention of the Synod of the South. About the year 1828, some politicians in South Carolina came to the conclusion that slavery could be perpetuated only by keeping the slaves in ignorance. To effect this, it was purposed to petition the Legislature of the State to pass a law prohibiting the instruction of slaves. To prevent the enactment of such a law, the following, submitted by Rev. John T. Pressley and Rev. John Hemphill, was unanimously adopted by the Synod in 1828, viz.:

WHEREAS. It is understood that petitions will be presented to the honorable Legislature of South Carolina, at its approaching meeting, praying the enactment of a law to prohibit the instruction of slaves to read; therefore.

*Resolved* 1. That in the judgment of this Synod, such a law would be a serious infringement of their rights of conscience.

2. That the members of this Synod use active exertions to forward memorials to the honorable Legislature, remonstrating respectfully, yet firmly, against the passage of any such law.

It is a fact which none dare deny, that on the subject of slavery a large number of the people of the United States became wildly fanatical. In the North many proclaimed that it was "the sum of all villainies." In the South many plunged recklessly into the opposite extreme. The position taken by the Associate Reformed Church, both in the North and South,



was certainly not ultra. The deliverances of the Synods of the North and West on slavery were extremely mild when compared with the deliverances of some other Christian denominations on the same subject. The Synod of the South never, at any time, made a deliverance on the subject; and although the supposed diversity of opinion on the subject of slavery was the main reason why the effort in 1826 to reorganize the General Synod failed, the Synod of the South still continued to cherish a tender regard for the Synod of the West. For ten years the Synod of the South continued to indulge the hope that the fragments of the Associate Reformed Church would again be united. Collections for foreign missions were regularly made in the congregations of the Southern Synod, and the money raised was sent, in some instances, to the Synod of New York, to be used by them. There is no evidence that the Synod of the South took offense at the Synod of the West on account of the position of that Synod on the subject of slavery. On the contrary, the Synod of the South continued to cherish for the other two Synods of the Associate Reformed Church, and especially for the Synod of the West, a tender regard, and no alienation of feeling existed as late as 1836. After that time friendly intercourse began to be more formal and less frequent, and soon ceased altogether.

It is due to the Synod of the West to say that it reciprocated the fraternal love cherished by the Synod of the South, and deferred the proposed union, fearing its deliverances on the subject of slavery would involve the Synod of the South in a difficulty with the civil authorities. This difficulty the Synod of the South seems to have ignored entirely, and was anxious for the union.



## CHAPTER XXV.

THE PROSPECTS BRIGHTEN ABOUT 1834—Nullification and Protective Tariff Disturbance—South Carolina Fearfully Disturbed—Immorality and Vice Increase—Mr. Clay's "Compromise" of 1833—Peace and Quiet Restored—Number of Ministers in the Synod in 1834—Their Names—All Dead but Dr. Boyce—Change in Feeling on Account of Slavery—Slavery Dragged into Everything—To be Ultra was an Evidence of Loyalty—Friendly Inter-course Between the North and South Cease—Resolution of the Synod of the South in 1834—Its Object—Resolution of 1835—Rev. Samuel W. McCracken Professor of Divinity for the Synod of the South—Politicians Prejudiced Against the Associate Reformed Synod of the South—Ultra Notions of Some—Attempt to Found a Manual Labor School—Failed—Agents Appointed to Collect Money, to be Called an Educational Fund—Resolutions Respecting the Establishing of a Seminary at Due West—Report of the Agents—Seminary Opened February, 1836—Called Clark and Erskine Seminary—Theological Seminary—Professor Elected—Rev. E. E. Pressley Elected in 1837—Erskine College Founded.

About the year 1834 the prospects of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South began to brighten. For a period of thirty years it had made but little progress. A number of difficulties had to be encountered, overcome or outlived. During the existence of the General Synod the energies of the Synod of the South were directed, in part, to the refutation of errors, and thereby partially paralyzed, so far as the spread of the gospel was concerned. In addition to the time wasted in efforts to effect a union with the Synods of the West and North, the political condition of the country was unfavorable to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. In South Carolina the *Nullification* controversy disturbed everything for a number of years. Neighborhoods became divided, congregations were rent, and, in some cases, father and sons espoused opposite parties. This difficulty had its origin in the passage of an act by the American Congress, in 1828, levying what was called a "*Protective Tariff*." In the session of 1831-2, Congress passed another act similar in its nature. This inflamed the agricultural sections of the country against the manufacturing districts. In the Senate of the United States



Colonel Robert Y. Hayne, of South Carolina, appeared as the champion of States' rights, and Daniel Webster, of Massachusetts, as the advocate of the supremacy of the Constitution of the United States. In November, 1832, a Convention of delegates, called by the Legislature of South Carolina, assembled at Columbia and passed the *Nullification Ordinance*. The people of the State became divided, in what proportion it matters not, so far as our present purpose is concerned. One party took, or was given, the name of *Nullifiers*, and the other was called *Union* men. From the Atlantic ocean on the east, to the Savannah river on the west, and from the islands on the south to the mountain districts on the north, there was nothing but bitter strife. The country was flooded with pamphlets; some advocating Nullification and others advocating Union. Everything else was partially forgotten. Congregations met to worship God, and spent the intervals between the services in bitter disputes which sometimes terminated in fist fights.

Such was the condition of things in South Carolina from 1828 to 1833. The Church languished, and immorality and vice stalked over the land, joyful on account of their present achievements and jubilant in view of their prospective triumphs.

On the 1st of March, 1833, the "Compromise Tariff" bill, introduced by Mr. Clay, was passed into a law by Congress. In consequence of this the Convention of South Carolina again assembled and repealed the Ordinance of Nullification. Peace was again, at least partially, restored to the State. As far as could be, the line which had divided Nullifiers and Union men was wiped out, and an honest effort was made to forget the past and live in peace during the future.

When the Synod of the Carolinas became independent, there were in connection with it eleven ministers; in 1834 there were only fourteen. During that period of twelve years James Rogers, William Blackstock, John Hemphill, Robert Irwin and Charles Strong had died; John T. Pressley had gone to Allegheny, and Samuel P. Pressley had gone to Franklin College, Georgia. In 1833, Rev. Thomas Kitchin, of the Associate Presbytery of the Carolinas, and a number of congregations under the care of that presbytery, connected with the First Associate Reformed Presbytery.



The members of the Synod, in 1834, were Isaac Grier, Thomas Kitchin, E. Harris, Joseph Lowry, James Lowry, Henry Bryson, John Renwick, E. E. Pressley, James P. Pressley, James Boyce, Warren Flenniken, Robert M. Galloway, I. G. Whitherspoon, and Jonathan Galloway, probationer. Of these fourteen, Isaac Grier was the only one who was present in 1803, when the Synod was organized, and the Rev. Dr. James Boyce is the only one that is now alive of the whole number. The rest have all fallen asleep.

About the year 1834 that friendly feeling which had heretofore existed between the three Synods of the Associate Reformed Church underwent a marked change. This was produced by a number of causes; the principal one, however, was the opposite views which now began to be held with regard to the institution of slavery. Sectional feelings had been aroused, and the epithets North and South were applied as terms of reproach. Societies were organized in the North for the purpose of emancipating the slaves of the South. By these societies incendiary tracts were circulated among the slaves of the South.

The country soon became divided. The subject of slavery was dragged into everything. It was discussed around the fireside, on the public highway, in the harvest-field, in legislative halls and often in the pulpit. The children of the two great sections were educated to cherish for each other deadly hatred. Every new book had something in it either for or against slavery. To abuse the South was a large part of the religion of many at the North, and an unmistakable evidence of their loyalty to the Constitution of the United States. The sons and daughters of those who had exterminated the Algonquins, Hurons and Dakotas, melted into tears at the thoughts of the poor African, who had been stolen from his native land, brought to the sunny South and forced to cultivate the soil for a master. In the South every one learned to abuse the North. This was the evidence of patriotism. No southern man, it was thought, could love his country without hating the North. Friendly intercourse between the two sections of the country soon ceased to exist. It was more than a northern man's reputation was worth to be friendly towards the South, and the southern man who was not violently opposed to the North and



northern sentiments respecting slavery made himself an object of scorn and contempt to all his neighbors and even to his own blood kin. As a result of this alienation of sentiment the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, in 1834, deliberately and unanimously declared by resolution "that in their opinion it is prejudicial to the Southern Church to send our young men to the North or West, either to college or to a theological seminary."

In this resolution not one word is said either for or against slavery. All that is said, is that it was not for the interest of the Synod that their young men go to the North to be educated. The church, as a church, did not introduce purely political questions into its deliberations. So different, however, were the political opinions of the North and West from those of the South, and so violent were the different sections of country in promulgating their opinions, that the Synod wisely regarded the practice of sending young men to the North or West to be educated as exposing the church in the South to unnecessary reproach by ultra politicians.

The affection of the Synod of the South for the Synods of the North and West, although it may not have been as warm as it once was, had not cooled down into indifference. An evidence of this is found in the fact that at the meeting of the Synod at Cedar Spring, in 1835, "The propriety of a reorganization of General Synod was spoken of, and Synod were exhorted to keep this object in view, so soon as the providence of God seems to point the way." Another evidence that the Synod of the South cherished no hatred toward the Synods of the North and West, is the fact that in 1836 Rev Samuel W. McCracken, a member of the First Presbytery of Ohio, "was unanimously chosen to be Professor of Divinity for the Synod of the South." In fact the election of Mr. McCracken "to be Professor of Theology in the Southern Synod," is a very remarkable thing when the circumstances are considered. The presbytery to which he belonged was the only presbytery which, either in the Synod of the North or West, was decidedly opposed to slavery. It would be but fair to conclude that Mr. McCracken was opposed to slavery since he was pastor of Hopewell congregation, in Preble county, Ohio. This congregation, it will be remembered, first introduced the subject of



slavery into the Associate Reformed Church, and was always decided in its opposition to the institution. It is scarcely possible, certainly not probable, that a congregation so decided in its convictions on the subject of slavery would have tolerated a pastor whose opinions were not equally as decided.

Other facts might be brought forward to show that the Synod of the South, while it was firm and unwavering in its attachment to the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Church, and was ready, at all times, to oppose any and all innovations, either in doctrine or practice, never went out of the way to discuss political questions in ecclesiastical courts.

It is probable that the efforts to reorganize the General Synod, limited and unsuccessful as these efforts were, prejudiced some Southern politicians against the Associate Reformed Church, and, to some extent, retarded its growth. The minds of not a few in the South, as well as in the North, had become morbid. They were ready to drive a man from the country if he said, as the Associate Reformed Synod said in 1828, "That it is the duty of masters to instruct their servants to read the word of God"; or, as they said in 1839, "That it is the duty of church sessions to require of Christian masters and heads of families, belonging to their communion, to have their servants, who are 'bought with their money or born in their house,' baptized, as well as their children."

In 1834 it became manifest that the existence of the Synod of the South depended, under God, in ceasing to depend upon other denominations for educational advantages. For a number of years prior to this the providences of God had been pointing in that direction. On the 10th of November, 1834, the Synod met at Due West Corner, Abbeville District (now county), South Carolina. On the next day (the 11th), the following resolutions were adopted, viz.:

1st. *Resolved*, That it is expedient to make an effort to establish, in the bounds of this Synod, one or more schools or academies, on "the manual labor system."

2d. *Resolved*, That between this time and the next meeting of the Synod the members of Synod make inquiries in their respective congregations, as to the amount of funds which could be raised, or lands or stock which would or might be furnished, by any congregation or congregations in the bounds of this Synod.



3d. *Resolved*, That the Clerk of this Synod correspond with the principals of some approved manual labor schools in the United States, for the purpose of obtaining the most correct knowledge on the best mode of conducting a manual labor school.

4th. *Resolved*, That the teachers of said schools shall be members of the Associate Reformed Church.

5th. *Resolved*, That said academies shall be so located that the students may conveniently attend some Associate Reformed Church.

The adoption of the above resolutions marks a new and important era in the history of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. Important results became visible at once. The energies of the denomination were immediately concentrated. The object proposed to be accomplished was one which all regarded worthy of their efforts.

In 1835 the Synod met at Cedar Spring, in Abbeville county, South Carolina. The subject of education came up for consideration at an early hour on the first day. "Ministers were called on to see if they had laid the manual labor plan of education before their people." The reports were not favorable. The people did not favor the manual labor plan. Some congregations would give nothing for its support, others would support it on certain conditions. The Synod came to the conclusion that the manual labor plan was impracticable, and at once abandoned it.

The thing proposed to be accomplished was not however abandoned. A committee on education was appointed. This committee, on the next day, presented a report, which was amended and adopted, as follows, viz.:

1st. *Resolved*, That Synod embark immediately in raising a fund, which shall be called the Synod's Educational Fund. The interest of which fund shall be annually appropriated to aid young men in preparing for the ministry, and in procuring a necessary theological library for the benefit of the Associate Reformed Church.

2d. *Resolved*, That W. Flennikin be an agent in the First Presbytery, and E. E. Pressley in the Second Presbytery, to visit all the churches in the bounds, and such other places as their prudence may direct, to solicit funds; and, also, that Messrs. T. Turner, Jno. Wilson and James Lowry, be additional agents in the vacancies and remote parts of the church.

3d. *Resolved*, That the Synod hereby appoint James Lowry, in the First Presbytery, and James Lindsay, in the Second Presbytery, treasurers, to lend out such funds as the Synod may commit to their hands, and account for the same, giving to the Synod proper bond and security, for both principal and interest; and these treasurers shall report at every annual meeting of the Synod, and such treasurers shall retain not exceeding two per centum annually for their trouble in receiving and paying such moneys.



4th. *Resolved*, That every student so educated shall refund to the Synod the money advanced by Synod, in the space of five years after he is licensed, provided he join another denomination of Christians.

5th. *Resolved*, That in a case when a student may be assisted with a view to the ministry, yet at some period of his course he declines studying divinity, such student shall refund the money advanced by the Synod in three years from the time at which he so declines.

6th. *Resolved*, That we establish a school at Due West Corner, Abbeville District, S. C., and elect John S. Pressley, as our teacher. In this school shall be faithfully taught all those branches necessary to an entrance into the junior class in any respectable college. The Synod bind themselves to said John S. Pressley, in the sum of five hundred dollars, for the space of ten months. The school shall be opened for any student the first year, and afterwards to be regulated by the wisdom of the Synod.

7th. *Resolved*, That although we have a school, to which we expect, when at all convenient, our students will go, still we would give aid to any whose circumstances might seem to warrant them in going to another school.

8th. *Resolved*, That Rev. E. E. Pressley, A. C. Hawthorn, Jas. Lindsay, Jas. Fair and Abraham Haddon, be a Board of Directors of said school, whose duties shall be to secure the Teacher elect, examine beneficiaries, attend to the moral and religious character of the institution, discharge the debts of the students which were contracted by their order, and all other duties connected with such direction, and report their doings annually to the Synod.

9th. *Resolved*, That said school shall commence as soon as the first of February.

10th. *Resolved*, That agents, in collecting funds, exercise discretionary power as to the number of installments—but shall be limited to five years; and the first payment shall be considered due on the first of January, 1836.

11th. *Resolved*, That the Synod apply to the Legislature of South Carolina to be incorporated.

12th. *Resolved*, That J. Dulin and J. Foster, Esqs., be a committee on behalf of this Synod to apply to said Legislature, as above directed.

13th. *Resolved*, That the Synod at its next regular meeting reconsider all their proceedings relative to its Educational Fund, so that the dates of these instruments may be subsequent to the date of the Corporation Act.

*Resolved*, That the Clerk of this Synod report, at its next meeting, a catalogue of a theological library; which library shall not cost more than five hundred dollars.

*Resolved*, That the election of professor of divinity shall be postponed till next meeting of the Synod; and that in the meantime, students of divinity be under the direction of their respective presbyteries.

The above resolutions are important in themselves, and besides they indicate very clearly a vigorous state of life and activity which heretofore had not existed in the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. There was a crudity in the manual labor plan of education, which the practical sense of the people soon discovered. The plan now adopted met the hearty approbation of the Associate Reformed people. At the next



meeting of the Synod, the agents of the Synod's Educational Fund reported that they had "received in moneys and subscriptions seven thousand and thirty-five dollars." Nearly all this amount was raised in the settled charges—the vacancies contributing but little.

At this same meeting Abraham Haddon, chairman of the Board of Directors of Education, reported that they "proceeded to erect a building to be occupied as an academy." The building, he states, "was constructed on the most approved and most convenient plan." It was furnished with the necessary furniture, such as desks and globes. On the first Monday of February, 1836, the exercises of the academy commenced. During the year there were about twenty classical students in attendance. The whole number of students is not stated.

The primary design contemplated by the Synod was to establish a first class high school, in which young men having the gospel ministry in view might be prepared for the junior class in any respectable college. The ultimate end was the founding of a college.

The name given the institution at first was simply "The Academy at Due West Corner." In the act of incorporation the name "Clark and Erskine Seminary" was given it.

The theological seminary is older than the literary institution. The latter was designed to be the hand-maid of the former. In this the Synod of the South followed the example of the first seceders. They, immediately, on being thrust out of the Church of Scotland, erected a "Divinity Hall" and in connection with it established a "school of philosophy." Ten years before the founding of the academy at Due West the Synod determined "to establish a school of theology within their bounds." Two professors, Rev. John Hemphill and Rev. John T. Pressley, were elected. In the providence of God this arrangement was of short duration.

The necessity of a theological seminary was deeply felt, and at the same time that the Literary Academy was established at Due West it was determined to establish a theological seminary at the same place. In 1836 "Rev. Samuel W. McCracken, A. M., Professor of Ancient Languages in Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, was unanimously chosen to be Professor of Divinity for the Synod of the South." The salary of the theological



professor was fixed at eight hundred dollars. Mr. McCracken, however, did not accept. His reason for declining was, briefly, "the importance to the Associate Reformed Church of his present situation in the Miami University.

To meet the present emergency, Rev. E. E. Pressley was, in 1837, elected Professor of Theology for one year, with a salary of five hundred dollars. In 1838, the Synod "solemnly resolved to go into an election for a permanent professor of theology." The result was that Rev. E. E. Pressley was chosen. No doubt he would have been chosen in 1837, had not Mr. McCracken intimated that, in the event, "a suitable person could be found to fill his place at Oxford," he would accept the position to which he was elected by the Synod of the South.

In 1839, at the meeting of the Synod at Due West Corner, Mr. John S. Pressley tendered his resignation as principal of the literary department of Clark and Erskine Seminary. The resignation was accepted and a vote of thanks tendered to Mr. Pressley for the ability and zeal with which he had served the Synod.

The growth of the institution over which Mr. Pressley presided, was, from the beginning, rapid. In 1839, a select committee, appointed by the Synod to take into consideration the interests of the institution, recommended the extending of the course of studies. The report was adopted and a committee appointed to nominate a president and two professors.

Rev. E. E. Pressley was elected President and Professor of Moral Science; Neil M. Gordon, Professor of Languages, *pro tem.*, and John N. Young, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, *pro tem.* In 1840, John N. Young was elected permanent Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, and Rev. James P. Pressley, permanent Professor of Languages, and that he "take part in the theological department."

At the same meeting of Synod, the board of directors of Clark and Erskine Seminary called the attention of Synod to the pressing need of a suitable building in which to conduct the exercises of the institution. It had grown from a small beginning until now it assumed all the essential features of a literary college, in connection with a theological seminary.



The following recommendation was presented and adopted, viz.:

"That each minister be directed to act as agent in his own congregation and neighborhood, to collect money for the purpose of supporting the college at Due West Corner, and that they report to the board of directors, as soon as convenient, as to what amount can be raised, and if the amount be sufficient to warrant the board to commence a college edifice, costing not more than five thousand dollars, that they be instructed to commence it immediately on some cheap and suitable site in the neighborhood of the present location."

At the meeting of the Synod at Newhope, in Fairfield county, South Carolina, in October, in 1843, the board of directors reported as follows, viz.:

"The college building is now complete, and the entire cost thereof has been met by the treasurer of the building committee and of the literary and theological funds."

The entire cost was seven thousand and ninety dollars. The name Clark and Erskine Seminary was exchanged for Erskine College. In 1842 the first class graduated. The institution continued to grow in public favor, and, at the breaking out of the civil war, was the most flourishing denominational college in the South.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

EFFECT OF ERSKINE COLLEGE ON THE SYNOD OF THE SOUTH—A Great Undertaking Nobly Executed—Other Schools Spring up and Become Supporters of the College—Christian Magazine of the South Established—First Number Published January, 1843—Continued to Flourish for Nine Years—Erskine Miscellany Begun—Strength of the Synod in 1842—Dr. Isaac Grier died 1843—His Connection with the Synod—Missions Begun—Associate Church a Missionary Church—Labors of the Early Fathers—Of Those who Succeeded Them—Missionary Labors of the Fathers Confined to the Home Field—The Extent of this Field—Resolution of 1817—Missionaries Sent West—Length of their Journeys—Funds Raised—Missionaries Sent West Annually—Localities Visited—Young Men First Sent on a Tour West—Churches in the West Founded—Missions still Continued—Foreign Missions—Resolution of 1837—Synod Assists the Synod of the North and the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in Foreign Missions—Board of Foreign Missions—Rev. T. Turner's Resolution of 1843—African Mission Set on Foot—Failed Through Mismanagement.

The founding of Erskine College infused a spirit of enterprise into the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. It was a grand undertaking, and nobly was it accomplished. Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon the venerable fathers who conceived the idea, nor upon the people of the denomination who came up to the help of the Lord. Erskine College has done for the Associate Reformed Church and for the country a precious work. In it nearly all the living preachers in the Associate Reformed Synod of the South received their literary and theological education.

In addition to this, the founding and supporting of Erskine College stimulated the people of the denomination to undertake other important enterprises.

Very soon after Clark and Erskine Seminary was established at Due West, other classical schools were established in different sections of the Church. These, in due time, became supporters of Erskine College.

About the same time the necessity of a religious magazine, published under the sanction of the denomination, became manifest. The subject was discussed, first in private, and, in 1841, formally brought before the Synod. In this way the



attention of the church was directed to the proposed enterprise. It was approved of by the people, and, in October, 1842, the committee, to which the matter had been referred, submitted the following report, which was adopted, viz.:

"We recommend that the editorship of the *Christian Magazine of the South* be committed to Rev. J. Boyce; the subscription now on hand be put into his possession, and that he commence the periodical, if possible, as early as January, 1843."

In accordance with the above recommendation, the first number of the "*Christian Magazine of the South*" was published in January, 1843. The magazine continued to be issued monthly for nine years. From the beginning, it ranked high both in a literary and theological point of view.

In 1850, Messrs. W. R. Hemphill, J. O. Lindsay and J. I. Bonner, began the publication of the "*Erskine Miscellany*," a weekly religious paper.

In December, 1851, the publication of the "*Christian Magazine of the South*" ceased.

It is probable that the people of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South were unable at that time to sustain both publications, and that a weekly paper was demanded by the times; but it is almost certain, that it would have been to the interest of the church to have sustained the magazine. There are some denominational features which a publication similar to the "*Christian Magazine of the South*" is admirably adapted to advance, but are generally thought to be inconsistent with the popular notions of a weekly religious newspaper.

In this connection it may be noticed that, although the "*Christian Magazine of the South*" was published in the interest of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, it was not a remunerative enterprise to its editor. It accomplished much for the church, but little for its editor. Those were the palmy days of the credit system. Year after year Dr. Boyce continued to prepare editorials, which in elegance of style will compare favorably with the best productions in the English language. They were read, admired and praised, but in too many instances not paid for.

With a well equipped college and a monthly magazine well conducted, the Associate Reformed Church began to move forward at once. Still so few were the ministers and members in connection with the denomination, that it was no uncommon



thing for its name to be omitted "by those who reckon up the religious denominations of the world." In 1842 there were only twenty-five ministers, fifty-six congregations, thirteen hundred families, and about three thousand communicants.

In November, 1843, Rev. Isaac Grier, D. D., died. In 1803 he was present, as a licentiate when the the Associate Reformed Synod of the Carolinas was organized. As a pastor he was present when the Synod, in 1822, withdrew from the General Synod and resolved itself into an Independent Synod, assuming the name "Synod of the South," and in 1839 he was chairman of the committee which prepared a course of study to be pursued in the Theological Seminary. He saw the Associate Reformed Church in the South when it was like the cloud which the prophet's servant saw rise out of the sea—a mere speck on the sky. He saw it again taking root and spreading out its branches in every direction. He saw it again after it had been visited by death; weak, disheartened, and ready to perish. Finally, he saw it strong and vigorous, attacking Satan in his fortified castles, and bearing the glad tidings of the gospel into portions of every Southern State.

#### MISSIONS.

The Associate Reformed Synod of the South, no matter what is said to the contrary, has ever been zealous in prosecuting the work of Missions. This is true of all the branches of the Secession Church. By missionaries the Secession Church was planted in America, and by the labors of missionaries its principles and practices have been disseminated from Boston to Tampico.

By the self-sacrificing labors of Proudfoot, Martin, Clark and Boyse the Scotch Seceder and Covenanters Societies in the Carolinas and Georgia were first visited, encouraged and cheered. By these same men, in connection with Blackstock, Hemphill, Rogers, McKnight, Pressley, Irwin and Grier, these societies were organized into congregations. From 1803 to 1840, or even later, it might be said that every minister in connection with the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, no matter whether he were a settled pastor or not, was a missionary. With few exceptions, each made an annual missionary tour of three or four months. Mr. Blackstock, when he



was an old man, rode over Florida, Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee, as far as Obion county. During the winter of 1835-6 Rev. T. Turner rode more than eighteen hundred miles and preached thirty seven times in three months.

The early missionary efforts of the Associate Reformed Church of the South were so great in themselves, and so important in their final results, that their history demands more than a passing notice. That we may be able to place a due estimate on the early missionary enterprises begun and finally accomplished, at least in part, by the Associate Reformed Church, we must take into consideration all the surrounding circumstances.

One hundred years ago the greater portion of the two Carolinas and Georgia was a wilderness, dotted with only a few settlements at long intervals apart. These few settlements had been reduced to a state bordering on abject poverty. They had just emerged from a long and desolating war, which left the inhabitants of the country stripped of everything but the soil and liberty to till it. Scarcely had the sad consequences of the Revolutionary war passed away and the blessings of peace begun to be enjoyed, than the country was visited by another war. The effort to propagate Secederism in the South was made just before the Revolutionary war; was suspended during that contest, and then again begun before the treaty of peace was signed. In less than six months after the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, the venerable Thomas Clark set out from Salem, New York, on a missionary tour to the South. He was followed by John Jamison in 1783, and a few years afterward by John Boyse and John Hemphill. All these, except John Jamison, settled as pastors, but their pastoral charges were in reality extensive missionary fields. For a period of thirty-five years, a few men—never more than seven—preached the gospel, administered the sacraments, and performed other pastoral labors in not less than fifty societies, or congregations, scattered over a tract of country longer than England and wider than Scotland.

These labors were performed cheerfully, but with a degree of bodily toil and sacrifice, at the thoughts of which a modern missionary's heart would faint and fail. The men who planted the Associate Reformed Church in the South were literally



“in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of their own countrymen, \* \* in perils in the wilderness,” and several of them were “in perils of the sea,” and sad are we to say that they all were sometimes “in perils among false brethren.” They sought neither gold nor silver; houses nor land; but God granted them all an abundance of the good things of life, and bestowed upon them the rich blessing which attends the consciousness of having been faithful even unto death.

At the meeting of the Synod at Hopewell, Chester county, South Carolina, in October, 1817, the following resolutions were adopted, viz:

“*Resolved*, That for the purpose of supporting and extending the influence of Messiah’s reign and more effectually propagating the doctrines of grace and salvation, a Missionary Fund be raised and missionaries be sent out to preach the gospel to sinners.

“*Resolved*, That John T. Pressley and Charles Strong be a committee to prepare an address to the churches relating to supporting missionaries engaged in proclaiming the gospel to sinners.”

At the same meeting pastors were instructed to take up collections in their several congregations and report to the Synod at the next meeting.

A thousand copies of the address prepared by Messrs. Pressley and Strong were printed and distributed among the congregations; but, so far as appears from the minutes, but little was done in the way of collecting money.

Rev. Isaac Grier reported that one of his congregations, Steel Creek, had contributed forty dollars. During the year 1819 three hundred and twenty-three dollars and seventy-three and three-fourths cents were collected. Of this amount, Mr. Hemphill’s charge contributed one hundred and eighty-nine dollars and twelve and one-half cents; the united congregations of Canon Creek, King’s Creek and Prosperity, one hundred and two dollars and twelve and one-half cents; Mr. Blackstock, thirty-two dollars and forty-eight and three-fourth cents. The whole, together with the forty dollars contributed by Steel Creek, was put into the hands of Mr. Hemphill, Synod’s treasurer. The object for which the missionary fund was created, was for “the purpose of supporting those who were sent out to preach the gospel to sinners.” In harmony with the letter and spirit of this design, the Synod, in 1819, directed Rev. John T. Pressley



“to take a missionary tour of eight weeks in a western direction.” At the next meeting of Synod, Mr. Pressley reported that he had rode upward of nine hundred miles, and preached on an average every alternate day. His expenses were thirty-three dollars and forty-three cents, and he received from those to whom he preached seventeen dollars and twenty-five cents. Synod ordered that his expenses be paid, and he be allowed seven dollars per week.

In this missionary tour, Mr. Pressley visited and preached at a number of points in Georgia, in Alabama and in Middle Tennessee. The small societies in those States were gathered together and, as a result of his labors, were in a few years organized into congregations.

In 1820, Rev. Isaac Grier “was appointed to the labors of a missionary,” but for how long and in what region the minutes do not state. From another and reliable source it is learned that his labors were confined to the States of Florida, Alabama and Georgia, and that they continued for three or four months. According to his journal, Mr. Grier “traversed upwards of thirteen hundred miles, preached on twenty different days, received fifty dollars for Synod’s fund and expended thirty seven dollars.”

In 1821, “Rev. Mr. Blackstock was appointed a missionary to perform a tour of fourteen weeks, nearly in the same course of former missionaries.” The duty assigned him he performed to the entire satisfaction of the Synod. It is worthy of being put on record, that, although the field to be traversed by these first missionaries of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South was very large, and the labor exhausting and the comforts few, there is not a single instance in which a failure is reported. Nearly the whole of this early missionary work was, for good reasons, no doubt, put upon Messrs. Blackstock, Grier and Pressley. The first work given a young man, after being licensed, was to send him out on an extensive missionary tour. The points visited by Messrs. Grier, Pressley and Blackstock, and their location, so far as can be learned at present, were what is now Troy, Obion county, Tennessee. This point was visited first by Mr. Blackstock, in the winter of 1821–2. Union and Hopewell, in Maury county, and New-Hope, Head Spring and Prosperity, in Lincoln county, Tennessee, were visited by



Rev. John T. Pressley, in the winter of 1819-20. Covington, Georgia, was visited by Rev. John T. Pressley, first in the winter of 1819; at the same time he visited Bethel, Prosperity and Salem, in Alabama. The other points in Alabama were Hopewell, New Ireland, Fairview, Mount Pleasant, Cahaba, Zalmonah, Nanafalia, Pine Barren and Russel's Valley. In Florida, Tallahassee and other points were visited by both Mr. Grier and Blackstock. The names of several of these places were changed, some still bear the old names, some have ceased to exist, and a few are known by the old names but are in connection with other denominations of Christians.

With some propriety, the missionary tours of Messrs. Blackstock, Grier and Pressley might be called exploring expeditions. Perhaps it would be more in accordance with Scripture phraseology to call them Evangelists, and their labors evangelistic labors. If they did not build up strong Associate Reformed congregations, they contributed in no small degree to the evangelizing of the great States in which their labors were performed. They began a work which is not yet finished. It is still going on, and will go on until sun and moon and stars fade into darkness.

The territory explored by these venerable fathers was afterward visited by Harris, Bryson, Galloway, Boyce, Turner and others, and finally the Presbyteries of Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky and Memphis were organized out of the materials gathered up and arranged by these faithful missionaries of the cross.

It would be doing the memories of the fathers, Hemphill, Rogers, McKnight, Irwin, Renwick, Lowry and Strong, great injustice were it not mentioned that while Blackstock, Pressley and Grier were making their long missionary tours, they were supplying their pulpits and performing pastoral work in their respective congregations.

To this system of domestic missions the present existence of the Associate Reformed Church in the South is mainly due. The Synod has ever been crippled in prosecuting this great work to the full extent of the demands, on account of the want of preachers and the means to support them.



When all the circumstances connected with the early history of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South are duly considered, we are prepared to conclude that, by the providence of God, the missionary efforts of the denomination were restricted to the home field. For more than a quarter of a century no door of opening was made for the Synod, by the Head of the Church, to carry the gospel to a people of a strange language. During this period the domestic missionary labors of the Synod were attended with all and even more bodily sacrifice and mental solicitude than at present attends similar labors among the inhabitants of China, or among the Copts of Egypt, or the Catholics of Mexico.

The first time, so far as the minutes show, that the subject of Foreign Missions was brought before the Synod, was in October, 1837. At that time it was "resolved that every minister of our Synod lift a collection at his Spring communion to aid Foreign Missions." It is probable that collections "to aid Foreign Missions" had been "lifted" in all the settled charges long before this period. The members of the denomination had been trained to contribute to support foreign missions. The Associate Reformed Church in both its branches was, as has been seen, the direct fruit of foreign missionary labors, supported by contributions made by the mother Church in Ireland and Scotland. As a proof of the statement that the Associate Reformed people were educated to believe that the support of Foreign Missions was a part of Christian duty, it may be stated that nine congregations, in 1838, contributed for that purpose three hundred and twenty-seven dollars.

It was not, at that time, the intention of the Synod to send out a missionary into some foreign land. For this they were not prepared, and so they wisely concluded. With a noble Christian generosity they proposed to assist, to the measure of their ability, other Christian denominations to do what God in His providence saw fit not to permit them to do themselves.

The Board of Foreign Missions, which at that time (1837) consisted of Messrs. J. L. Young, John Wilson and W. Flennikin were directed "to transmit the moneys that are collected for Foreign Missions, to the Board of Commissioners of the



Synod of New York." In 1839 the following resolution, offered by Messrs. J. Boyce and T. Turner, was adopted, viz:

"That the moneys now in the hands of the Committee of Foreign Missions and moneys hereafter to be collected shall be transmitted to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Covenanters), to be applied to the use of their missionaries in India, until Synod shall have missionaries of her own to send to a foreign field."

To what extent the Associate Reformed Synod of New York and the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church were aided in supporting Foreign Missions by the Associate Reformed Synod of the South is not certainly known. Both received assistance, but only for a few years.

It is worthy of mention in this place that three of the first converts in India from heathen darkness, through the instrumentality of the labors of Covenanter missionaries, were given the Christian names, William Blackstock, Isaac Grier and John Hemphill. This was an indication of a feeling of gratitude towards the Associate Reformed Synod of the South which both the converted heathen and the Reformed Presbyterian Church were anxious to express.

In 1843, "Mr. T. Turner offered to the Synod a preamble and resolution, recommending that inquiries be instituted in relation to the expediency of establishing a mission in the colony of Liberia, or at some point on the western coast of Africa." The words, "some foreign field" were substituted for "the colony of Liberia, or at some point on the western coast of Africa." This change being made, the preamble and resolution were adopted, and Messrs. J. Boyce, T. Turner and N. M. Gordon appointed a committee to report on the subject at the next meeting of Synod.

The committee reported "that, as far as their inquiries had extended, they have not been able to discover in the present possession of Synod, either men or means adequate to the immediate undertaking; yet, in their estimation, the day is not far distant, when, with the blessing of God, we may be able to secure suitable laborers, and have at command all the facilities to engage in the laudable work of preaching the gospel beyond the limits of our domestic field, even among the heathen nations of the world."

The committee recommended, as a proper location for commencing the work of Foreign Missions, either the south-west



of our own country, among the Indian tribes, or on the western coast of Africa. The committee concluded their report by recommending the adoption of the following resolution, viz. :

That it be the duty of each minister of Synod to make inquiry for a suitable person or persons, who will engage in this important work, in either of the above named fields, and if the desired information be obtained report the same to Synod as soon as practicable.

This resolution was adopted, and also another, recommending Rev. J. C. Chalmers, treasurer of the Foreign Missionary Fund, to place all moneys on hand, or hereafter collected, at interest.

The subject of Foreign Missions now began to assume the proportions of a living reality. The people became interested. Missionary societies were organized. Missionary sermons and missionary conferences became a regular part of the business transactions at every meeting of Synod. A number of persons generously offered to give valuable servants to the Synod, that they might be prepared to preach the gospel and then be sent to proclaim the glad tidings to the sable sons of Africa.

At the meeting of the Synod in 1845, Mr. Turner proposed that a mission be established in Liberia, and that a colored man be sent in the capacity of a missionary to that point. This being regarded by the Synod as too precipitate, the matter was deferred for a year. In the meantime the subject was discussed in the "*Christian Magazine of the South*."

In 1846, Mr. W. R. Hemphill, in behalf of the special committee on Foreign Missions, "recommended the establishment of a mission school in Kentucky, in Africa, to be under the supervision of Thomas Ware, a colored man, now in Africa."

The recommendation of Mr. Hemphill gave rise to the adoption of the following resolutions, viz. :

1. That Rev. Gilbert Gordon, Rev. N. M. Gordon and Mr. Shannon Reid. of Kentucky, be appointed a committee to ascertain the character of Thomas Ware, his suitableness as a mission teacher, a suitable location for a school. expenses of such school, and report to next meeting of Synod.

2. That Messrs. Watt, Grier, J. M. Young and D. Pressley be a committee to select some two colored persons who have been offered to the service of Synod, to be sent to Kentucky, to be educated for the African mission.

During the next synodical year little progress was made, except that a place in Liberia, called Kentucky, was settled upon as the proper location in which to establish a Foreign



Mission. The prospects, for a few years, seemed to warrant the indulgence of the hope that the enterprise would finally be crowned with success.

At their meeting in October, 1847, Synod appointed a committee, consisting of a member selected from each of the six presbyteries, to take the whole matter in hand, and, if possible, put the mission into operation.

This committee opened a correspondence with the secretary of the African Colonization Society, and also with Thomas Ware, a colored man, who was at that time engaged in teaching in Liberia. The correspondence was every way satisfactory, and a call was made for missionaries. Three colored boys were placed at the disposal of the Synod. Dr. George W. Pressley gave his boy Harrison, Mr. James Robinson gave his boy William, and the Misses Murphy gave their boy Pinkney.

In November, 1848, Thomas Ware died, but Rev. H. W. Erskine, of the Presbyterian Board, took his place. An application was made to the government of Liberia for a grant of twenty acres of land. This request was readily acceded to. Four boys were placed under the care of Mr. Erskine, to be trained for the ministry. These boys were selected by Mr. Erskine himself in Africa.

In the meantime a school was opened by the Synod in Kentucky, for the training of colored men for the responsible position of missionaries. The school was presided over by N. M. Gordon, of the Presbytery of Kentucky, and was modeled on the "manual labor" plan. That his school was defective in its organization and in its mode of operation, does not admit of a moment's doubt. Some enterprises fail because they do not receive moral and pecuniary support. Such was not the case with respect to the African Mission School established in Kentucky by the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. It failed because of its defective organization.

The African Mission dragged itself along until 1853. The Board of Foreign Missions, in their report of that year, say :

"It becomes our painful duty to report to the Synod the failure of the African Mission, so far as regards the training or preparation of the boys that have been placed under the supervision of Rev. N. M. Gordon."



Two of the boys became immoral in their conduct, and the third was regarded as intellectually unfit to accomplish the work for which he had been selected.

The preparatory mission school closed, and no further effort was ever made to open it.

In Africa some good, no doubt, was done, but it was of the most general character.

In the school of Mr. Erskine four boys were supported for several years by the Synod. So far as establishing an Associate Reformed Mission was concerned, nothing was effected. In 1855 the Board recommended that, for the present, the Synod cease to support "the boys in Mr. Erskine's school." The enterprise cost Synod a considerable sum of money, which apparently accomplished little good. The great defect of the school established in Kentucky, and presided over by Rev. N. M. Gannon, was that the "manual labor" feature was made too prominent, and it was suspicioned this was for the private ends of those immediately in charge. It was an all work and no study school.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

FOR THIRTY YEARS ONLY TWO PRESBYTERIES—Their Boundaries—Organization of the Tennessee Presbytery—Of the Alabama, Kentucky and Georgia Presbyteries—Of the Memphis Presbytery—Of Virginia Presbytery—Of Arkansas Presbytery—Of the Ohio Presbytery—Of the Texas Presbytery—Proposed Union with the Presbyterian Church—Their Difference.

For a period of more than thirty years the Associate Reformed Synod of the South was composed of only two presbyteries. The presbytery organized at Long Cane, Abbeville county, South Carolina, on February 24th, 1790, was appropriately named the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia, because the congregations over which it assumed jurisdiction were situated in the two Carolinas and Georgia. For the convenience of the members, and also as a preparatory step to the organization of the General Synod, the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia was divided, and two presbyteries formed. Broad river, in South Carolina, was made the dividing line. All east of that stream and south of Virginia was denominated the *First Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia*, and all west, the *Second Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia*. These presbyteries are now known as the *First* and the *Second*.

The First Presbytery perpetuated the original organization. The Second was constitutionally organized at Cedar Spring, Abbeville county, South Carolina, on the 8th of April, 1801. The members of the Second Presbytery, at the time of its organization, were Alexander Porter, Peter McMullan, William Dixon and David Bothwell, settled pastors; James McGill, licentiate; Robert Irwin and Isaac Grier, students of theology.

It will be seen that the boundaries of both these presbyteries were very indefinite. The territory south and west of Virginia was divided by Broad river, and in it two presbyteries constituted. The Second Presbytery, like the original boundary of South Carolina, extended westward from Broad river to the South Sea.



This arrangement continued until the fall of 1836 when, on account of its increase, the Synod deemed "it expedient to form a new presbytery in the West." The boundary of this new presbytery is thus given: "To commence on the Mississippi river at the point of 34° north latitude, and run east to the Georgia line, thence north to Tennessee, thence with the eastern line of Tennessee to the middle of the State of Kentucky, thence west to the Mississippi river, thence down that river to the beginning." The ecclesiastical court having jurisdiction over the members of the Associate Reformed Church who were scattered over this extensive district, was named the PRESBYTERY OF TENNESSEE.

The ministers laboring within the bounds of this new presbytery, and in connection with it, were R. M. Galloway, Henry Bryson, Eleazar Harris and John Wilson. These, in accordance with the appointment of Synod, met at Salem Church, Tipton county, West Tennessee, on the fourth Monday of April, 1837, and constituted the Presbytery of Tennessee. At the meeting of the Synod in 1842, it was thought proper to erect three new presbyteries, and a resolution to that effect was offered and adopted. These three new presbyteries were to be designated, respectively, Alabama, Kentucky and Georgia.

The Alabama Presbytery, the territorial limits of which were those of the States of Alabama and Mississippi, was organized on Friday before the first Sabbath of December, 1842, at Prosperity Church, Dallas county, Alabama. The ministers in connection with this presbytery at the time of its organization were, Joseph McCreary, James M. Young and David Pressley.

The Kentucky Presbytery, which embraced all the Associate Reformed congregations in the States of Kentucky and Missouri, was organized at Ebenezer Church, Jessamine county, Kentucky, on Friday before the third Sabbath in December, 1842. The ministers at that time in connection with the Kentucky Presbytery were, Gilbert Gordon, N. M. Gordon and William H. Rainey.

The Presbytery of Georgia was organized at Bethel, Burke county, Georgia, on Friday, the 31st of March, 1843. This presbytery embraced the State of Georgia, and a few vacancies in Alabama and Tennessee. The ministers constituting the



Presbytery of Georgia were John S. Pressley, Thomas Turner and D. C. Haslett. The ruling elders were Alexander Cowan and William Little.

On Friday, before the second Sabbath of April, 1853, the Memphis Presbytery was organized at Salem Church, Tipton county, Tennessee. This Presbytery consisted of all the members of the Synod living in the western district of Tennessee, and in north Mississippi. Their names were John Wilson, J. P. Weed, J. K. Boyce, J. A. Sloan, H. H. Robinson, J. L. Young and S. P. Davis.

The Presbytery of Virginia was organized at Ebenezer, Rockbridge county, Virginia, on Monday, the 8th of May, 1854. It embraced all the ministers and congregations in connection with the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, within the geographical limits of the State of Virginia. The ministers connected with the Virginia Presbytery were Horatio Thompson, I. G. McLaughlin and W. M. McElwee; and A. B. Beamer, student.

The Arkansas Presbytery was organized at Pisgah Church, Pope county, Arkansas, on Friday, before the first Sabbath of May, 1861. Its territorial limits were those of the State of Arkansas. The ministers in connection with the Arkansas Presbytery, at the time of its organization, were John Patrick, J. M. Brown, J. A. Dickson, W. S. Moffat and A. Mayn.

The Ohio Presbytery was organized at the house of Mr. Nathaniel Taylor, in Belmont county, Ohio, on the 20th of February, 1865. Its proper name was the First Associate Reformed Presbytery of Ohio. Those taking part in the organization were Revs. E. B. Calderhead and James Borrowes, and ruling elders, William Andrews and Joseph Mehollin. In 1867 it made application to be received under the care of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. This request was granted, and it was ever after known as the Presbytery of Ohio.

The Texas Presbytery was organized at Harmony Church, Freestone county, Texas, on the 9th of December, 1876. The ministers constituting the organization were T. J. Bonner, J. M. Little and W. L. Patterson. This presbytery has ecclesiastical jurisdiction over all the Associate Reformed congregations in the State of Texas.



Two of these presbyteries—Georgia and Ohio—have ceased to have an organic existence. In 1875 the Georgia Presbytery was, at its own request, merged into the Second Presbytery; and, in 1879, the Presbytery of Ohio asked and obtained permission of Synod to coalesce with the United Presbyterian Church. This it did not, however, do until the 30th of May, 1881.

The Presbyteries of Tennessee and Alabama were, by the action of Synod, consolidated on the 24th of September, 1881. The consolidated Presbytery held its first meeting at Hopewell, Maury county, Tennessee, on the 21st of April, 1882. It is now known as the Presbytery of Tennessee and Alabama.

On several occasions, beginning at an early period, efforts were made to form a union between the Presbyterian Church and the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. Committees were appointed by both bodies, and conferences were held, but no basis was ever devised which was entirely satisfactory to either party. The main barrier in the way to an organic union between these two bodies is the different doctrinal opinions held by the two denominations respecting psalmody. The point of divergence is not respecting, as some erroneously think, a version of the Psalms, but the Psalms themselves. The Confession of Faith of these two denominations is, we may safely say, the same. It is the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter. The psalmody of the two churches, however, is as different in practice as it is possible for it to be.

The position held by the Associate Reformed Church on psalmody, as laid down in her Confession of Faith, and as exhibited in her practice, is that the one hundred and fifty psalms contained in the Book of Psalms, in the Bible, is the psalmody of the church. That there may be no ambiguity about the position held, it is added, "nor shall any composure merely human be sung in any of the Associate Reformed Churches."

Not one word is said about the version. It is taken for granted that some metrical version which is faithful to the original, or which will express the whole sense, and nothing but the sense of the Hebrew Psalter will be adopted.



No matter what may be the position occupied by the Presbyterian Church on psalmody, it is manifestly, both in theory and practice, not that held by the Associate Reformed Church. Such being the case, every effort which has been made to unite the two denominations has been ineffectual ; and so long as the two denominations continue to hold their present opinions concerning psalmody, no organic union will ever be formed.

It may be added, as a matter of history, that every effort to consolidate the Presbyterian and Associate Reformed denominations resulted, not only ineffectual, but injurious. Misunderstandings sprung up between the committees, and these were disseminated, in various ways, among the membership of the two denominations. The Presbyterian Church was not strengthened, and it is certain the Associate Reformed Church was weakened, and a real injury done to Christianity.

The general sameness of these two denominations is admitted by both the ministerial and lay members in their connection. They have, in part, the same ecclesiastical ancestry—both claim the Church of Scotland as mother—and in a long series of doctrines and duties they are one. In addition to this, it may be added, the congregations of the two denominations in several sections of the country overlap each other, and the members are wedded together by the ties of consanguinity and marriage. Still they differ on psalmody. This has been sufficient to keep up the separate organizations. No doubt their division is schism, but the blame does not rest exclusively on the Associate Reformed Church. It is proper to mention that all the efforts made to effect a union of the Presbyterian and Associate Reformed Synod of the South were made prior to the union of the Old School and New School Presbyterian Churches.

This transaction had a direct tendency to cool the ardor of the most earnest advocates of union in the Associate Reformed Synod. Those who had most earnestly plead for union with the Old School Presbyterian Church ceased entirely to advocate it, and became its open opposers when the union of the Old School and New School denominations was consummated. Right or wrong the New School branch was regarded as holding many heterodox doctrines, as well as being very loose in discipline.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE WAR—Its Causes—Results—State of the Country—Institutions of the Associate Reformed Church—Erskine College—Foreign Missions—Theological Seminary—Christian Magazine of the South—Erskine Miscellany—Due West Telescope—Associate Reformed Presbyterian—Due West Female College.

At the general election in the autumn of 1860, Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, was chosen President of the United States. This was the proximate cause of what, with propriety, is called the civil war. The real causes of that event were many and complicated. It would perhaps be safe to say that the principal cause was slavery. For a period of half a century the opinions of the two great sections of the United States had been constantly verging toward ultraism with reference to the system of slavery as it existed in the South. There was, in addition to the diversity of opinions respecting the institution of slavery, a want of agreement in opinion respecting the import of the National Constitution. One party held that the States are subordinate to the general government, and that the union of the States is indissoluble. Another party held that the sovereignty of the nation is lodged, not in the general government, but in the individual States; and that the compact entered into between the several States is only voluntary, and, consequently, not indissoluble. There were several other causes which served to foster the alienation of feeling produced by the discussion of the main questions at issue. Among these may be mentioned the *Missouri Agitation* of 1820–21; the *Nullification Acts* of South Carolina, in 1832; the *Annexation of Texas* in 1845, and the *Kansas-Nebraska Bill* of 1854.

In addition to the above causes of the rupture, it may be mentioned that from 1850 to 1860, to say nothing of the preceding and succeeding years, the country was overstocked with third-rate politicians. Statesmanship of the first order, and genuine patriotism had been forced to retire into obscurity, and



the management of the public affairs of the country had been, by a fatal necessity, entrusted largely to ambitious, not to say unprincipled, demagogues.

The election of Abraham Lincoln was followed by a Convention of the people of South Carolina. This Convention met in the city of Columbia, on the 17th of December, 1860; organized, and on the same day adjourned to Institute Hall, in the city of Charleston. Here, on the 20th, was passed an *Ordinance* by which all compacts previously entered into between the State of South Carolina and the other States constituting the United States of North America were dissolved, and the independent sovereignty of the State of South Carolina boldly asserted.

Other States followed the example of South Carolina; the Confederate government was organized, and the two great sections of the country began in earnest to make preparations for the conflict.

The first gun was fired on Fort Sumter, at half-past four o'clock, on the morning of the 12th of April, 1861, from a South Carolina battery. The first blood shed was on the 19th of the same month. While the first regiments of volunteers, sent by Massachusetts, were passing through the city of Baltimore, on their way to the national capital, they were fired upon by the citizens, and three men killed.

When the civil war began, the American people were, to all human appearances, in a prosperous condition; but they were restless and unhappy. When it closed, in 1865, they were neither happy nor prosperous. The South was poor. Her fields had been neglected; her villages, towns and cities had been desolated, and the hearts of her people were draped in grief. The land was full of widows, and parents were without sons.

For four long years hideous war had dipped his feet in the blood of the slain, and gorged his cruel eyes on the mangled bodies of the dead. The plow was beaten into a sword, and the pruning hook into a spear, and the nation learned nothing but war. The teacher and his pupils laid aside their books, and buckling on the panoply of the martial field, hastened to the bloody conflict. Schools, academies and colleges suspended operation, and the country for four years presented the appear-



ance of one grand drill camp. The foundations of civil society were upturned, and the pursuits of domestic life languished and died. Even the beasts of the field felt the shock. The sanctuary of God was invaded, and the family altar torn down. Iniquities abounded, and the love of many grew cold.

Upon nothing was the deleterious effects of the war more visible than upon the church and her institutions. The gospel of Jesus Christ is good news, because it proclaims glory to God and peace to man. To his blood-bought people the Saviour bequeathed, in his will and testament, peace. "My peace," he says, "I give unto you." This is their inheritance. The direct tendency of the gospel is to banish war and establish peace; and the proper effect of war is to banish the gospel. When, in 1861, the civil war began, the church in the United States was apparently in a flourishing condition. The various denominations were exerting over the masses a seeming salutary, moral and religious influence. In numerical strength the church was growing, but practical godliness was certainly not one of the prominent features of the American people. In fact, the whole nation was morally diseased. By the mass of the people God's law was disregarded, and, in many sections, the church had been thoroughly Americanized, and made to conform to the worldly notions of the multitude.

The civil war is convincing proof that the American people were not fully under the power of Christianity.

In 1861 the Associate Reformed Synod of the South was, like other Christian denominations, apparently in a growing condition. Erskine College had been endowed, and the number of students in attendance were greater than at any previous time. The number of candidates for the ministry was annually increasing and new fields of usefulness were opening up in all sections of the broad land. When the war ended the endowment funds were all, or nearly all, gone. They perished in the general wreck. At an early period during the war the doors of the college were closed. The young men of the country had gone to the tented field. The theological seminary experienced a similar fortune. The picture was sad.

The church of God, however, is built upon a sure foundation. The life of its individual members is hid with Christ, and for the accomplishing of the grand purposes of redeeming



love, God will control all things, even the wrath of the wicked. It is not, by any means, uncommon that God brings light out of darkness, turns the counsel of an Ahithophel into foolishness, and makes what is by men meant for evil a real good.

The prosperity of the different branches of the Christian church in the South since the close of the civil war has been equal to that of any previous period. In fact, it may be said that Protestantism has been enjoying, during the whole period of seventeen years, a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

This is certainly true of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. A simple statement of the work undertaken and accomplished by the Associate Reformed Synod of the South since April, 1865, will demonstrate both the actual and comparative prosperity of the denomination. The present condition of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South cannot, we suppose, be more clearly presented to view than by an examination into the actual conditions of its various institutions and enterprises. In performing this task we begin with ERSKINE COLLEGE.

That the present condition of this institution may be understood, we must take into consideration its condition at the close of the war. One short sentence is sufficient to state this. When Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered, on the 9th of April, 1865, Erskine College was dead. Its endowment was nearly all swept away, and the people to whom it belonged were, in common with the rest of their fellow-citizens, miserably poor. The buildings and libraries belonging to the college and to the two literary societies remained. Everything else was gone.

At the annual meeting of the Synod of the Associate Reformed Church in September, 1865, measures were adopted for the revival of the college. The feeling prevailed throughout the church that it was necessary to the successful prosecution of the proper work of the denomination. Without at once seeing the way clear toward the support of the institution in its work, on account of the general exhaustion of the country and almost universal bankruptcy of the citizens, it was nevertheless resolved to go forward. President Patton had returned to take charge of another institution, and Professor Kennedy had been transferred to the Due West Female College. Rev.



Dr. R. C. Grier, who had for a time been placed at the head of the Theological Seminary, was again made President of the College, and the other members of the faculty continued in their respective places. The faculty then consisted of Rev. Dr. R. C. Grier, president, and Revs. Drs. J. P. Pressley and W. R. Hemphill, Rev. J. N. Young and J. F. Lee, professors.

This faculty continued the exercises of the college amidst the difficulties and discouragements that met every enterprise, both ecclesiastical and secular, during the years immediately succeeding the war. To revive the spirit of education, with all the memories of the late disastrous struggle fresh in mind, and the poverty of a well-nigh ruined country, was an arduous task. How far the task was performed the subsequent history of the college must reveal.

To place the matter of education more entirely in the hands of the church, the faculty of the college, in 1867, all resigned. This opened the way for a new organization. At the meeting of Synod of that year an election was entered into and resulted as follows: Rev. R. C. Grier, D. D., President; Rev. J. P. Pressley, D. D., Professor of Greek; Rev. E. L. Patton, Professor of Latin; Rev. J. N. Young, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and William Hood, Professor of Belles Lettres and History. Drs. Grier and Pressley, and Rev. Young proceeded immediately to take charge of the departments assigned them by the action of Synod. Prof. Patton, having at this time charge of another institution of learning, declined his appointment. Prof. Hood, so soon as his term of service as Treasurer of South Carolina expired, took the position assigned him. At the next annual meeting of Synod the vacancy in the department of Latin was filled by the election of Prof. W. S. Lowry.

With the faculty thus organized the instruction and government of the college was conducted with an encouraging degree of success until interrupted by the death of President Grier, which occurred on the 30th day of March, 1871. This event was recognized as a heavy blow on the college. Exalted hopes were cherished of the rich harvest to be realized from his high attainments and ripe experience. Dr. Pressley presided during the remaining portion of that collegiate year.



At the meeting of the Synod of the same year, the Rev. W. M. Grier, D. D., son of the deceased president, was chosen to fill his place. No other change occurred in the ranks of the faculty for a period of six years, when they were again invaded by the hand of death. The venerable James Pressley, D. D., died on the 30th day of March, 1877.

At the next ensuing meeting of Synod, Rev. E. L. Patton, LL. D., was elected to fill the chair made vacant by the death of Dr. Pressley, in the department of Greek. This position he accepted and immediately took charge of the college classes in this department, the duties of which he has discharged with marked ability and eminent success. At the meeting of Synod in 1880, Prof. J. N. Young tendered to Synod the resignation of his professorship, which being accepted, he was requested to continue in his department for another year, or until a successor could be secured. The board of trustees were also directed to proceed at an early day to make the election of a professor for this department. In obedience to this order, at a meeting called soon after, John H. Miller, of Alabama, was chosen; but he not wishing to enter upon the duties of his office immediately, Prof. Young continued in the position until July 1st, 1881. On his retiring there was severed the last link that bound the past to the present. He alone remained of the original faculty, having been associated with those self-denying and devoted men with whom the conception of the college originated, and who shared freely of the burden and heat of the day in founding it, and promoting its early growth, and who has at all times, during an extended period of forty years, labored for its welfare and prosperity. In 1882, Prof. Patton tendered his resignation of his professorship in Erskine College, in order to accept the chair of Ancient Languages in South Carolina University.

The present (1882) faculty of the college is composed of the following members:

Rev. W. M. Grier, D. D., President and Professor of Moral and Mental Science; William Hood, Professor of Belles Lettres and History; William S. Lowry, Professor of Latin; J. H. Miller, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Science, and J. I. McCain, Professor elect of Greek.



The number of students in Erskine College since the reorganization after the close of the war has not been as great as during the period preceding the war. This may be accounted for, no doubt, by two facts. One of these is the increase of denominational colleges in the State of South Carolina and adjacent States; thus in the matter of education denominational lines are more closely drawn. The other is the very general want of means, in consequence of which many are unable to enjoy the advantages of a liberal education.

#### FINANCES OF THE COLLEGE.

The effort to endow the college, which commenced about 1854, and in which Rev. W. R. Hemphill, D. D., was a principal actor, assisted by Rev. J. C. Chalmers and others, was so far successful that in 1864 the treasurer's report states the aggregate fund at seventy-five thousand dollars. Of this sum about fifty thousand consisted of Confederate bonds and securities and personal notes given by subscribers to the endowment fund. The former, of course, were worthless at the close of the war, and the latter, being some twelve thousand dollars, yielded but a trifling amount owing to the general inability of the subscribers to meet their obligations. Thus the endowment fund which had risen to an amount sufficient to meet the ordinary expenses of the college was, by these losses and the failure of two banks in which the college owned stock, reduced to an available fund of not more than fifteen thousand dollars. On a portion of this balance of the endowment fund that had escaped the general wreck there was the accumulated interest of several years. This accumulated interest furnished valuable aid in sustaining the college during the period intervening between September, 1865, and 1869. At the meeting of Synod in September, 1867, it was resolved, on certain conditions, to raise a temporary endowment, according to the plan recommended by the committee on the college, viz:

That an association be immediately formed of two hundred or more persons, who shall each agree to pay twenty dollars annually for five years; every member of said association being entitled to tuition for one student for every twenty dollars so paid. \* \* \* This scheme shall go into operation so soon as two hundred names shall have been obtained, the tuition to be enjoyed as the money is paid.

For the prosecution of this scheme Dr. Hemphill was put in charge. His efforts were crowned with success. Hence the



pecuniary wants of the college for the five years immediately succeeding September, 1867, were satisfied by the scheme known as the "*five year endowment*."

With the termination of the five year endowment it was resolved by Synod to undertake the work of raising an endowment fund of one hundred thousand dollars, by installments of ten thousand per year for ten years, and that the said sum should be retained and perpetuated as a standing fund, the interest of which alone was to be used in the current expenses of the college. It is due to truth to state that the sum contemplated by this resolution was not fully realized. The one hundred thousand dollars has not yet been reached, yet by the treasurer's report to the Board of Trustees at the last annual meeting, the fund presents respectable proportions—in the aggregate seventy-eight thousand five hundred dollars. Of this amount, however, sixteen thousand six hundred dollars consists of notes given by the subscribers to the endowment fund, and are yet to be collected. Should this sum be collected without heavy loss, the pecuniary support of the college will, by judicial management, be assured.

We may safely regard the present condition and prospects of the college as hopeful. Though not rich in funds, yet possessing a moderate supply. Although not crowded with students, yet having enough to accomplish an important work for the church and the world.

In view of the object for which Erskine College was founded and for which it has been sustained, we conclude that the great want is a more full recognition of the church's obligation, not simply to contribute of her money when needed, but more especially to devote her sons, that they may be in the way of training for the service of God in the gospel ministry or other useful occupations among the educated.

The growth and prosperity of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South since the close of the war may also be learned by a review of its

#### FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The efforts of the Synod in its attempt to engage in foreign missionary labors previous to the civil war have been stated elsewhere. They need not be repeated. It is sufficient to state that after the failure, in 1853, of the African Mission, the sub-



ject of foreign missions ceased for a number of years to be considered in a formal way by the Synod. The way to engage in foreign missions seemed to be blocked by the providence of God. Immediately prior to the breaking out of the war, the subject was again revived. The war came on and we hear no more of the missionary spirit until 1872, at which time the Synod raised a committee, whose duty it was to ascertain the amount and condition of the Foreign Missionary Fund, to inquire into the practicability of the enterprise and to call out candidates. That committee was subsequently erected into a board of foreign missions.

The Synod, at its next meeting (1873) at Mount Zion, Missouri, resolved, if possible, and that without delay, to thrust a missionary into the foreign field; and, as auxiliary to that end, the committee were instructed to address a letter to the churches to inform them of the purposes of Synod, and to elicit in them an evangelical spirit. This order was obeyed.

At the meeting at Hopewell, Maury county, Tennessee (1874), two schemes or methods of conducting the mission were discussed—the coöperation scheme and the independent. By the first it was proposed to coöperate with the United Presbyterian Church in Egypt—by the second, to select an entirely new field unoccupied by any church. The first was adopted, but not without an invitation by the United Presbyterian Church to work with them. Near the end of the year 1874, Miss Mary E. Galloway, of Due West, S. C., a lady of piety and of fine accomplishments, offered her services to the Board of Foreign Missions, which offer was promptly accepted, and preparations were forthwith made for her departure. After several valedictory meetings were held at Due West and elsewhere, she took her departure from home and friends for Egypt, on the 28th of January, 1875, via New York, Liverpool and the overland route across the continent, landing at Alexandria early in March. Her first attention, of course, was directed to an acquisition of the language of the country (Arabic), and that necessitated her being for a time at certain localities, such as Alexandria, Ramleh and Cairo. Her marriage with the Rev. John Giffen, of the United Presbyterian Mission in Egypt, the following year, brought her more immediately into contact with that mission, and to some extent facilitated her efforts in the



missionary work. Having good linguistic ability, she was not long in acquiring a knowledge of the Arabic, and consequently not long in being initiated into her mission work. Her points of labor were Alexandria, Ramleh, Cairo, Mansoura and Osioot, or Assyoot, but chiefly at the latter place, in a college of the United Presbyterian Mission.

Having broken down with her arduous labors and the debilitating effects of the climate, she last year, 1881, accompanied by the Rev. John Giffen, resorted to the north of Italy for a few months. Being somewhat improved, she returned to Egypt, but did not live to see the end of the year. She died at Cairo, on the 16th of October, leaving a husband and three children. So much for Egyptian mission.

The Synod having resolved, in 1878, to establish a mission in Mexico, the Rev. Neill E. Pressley offered his services, which were accepted. After a correspondence with the missionaries of other denominations in that country as to the most eligible points for establishing missionary stations, the board despatched Mr. Pressley and family, in December, 1878, to the city of Mexico, where he remained some ten months in acquiring a knowledge of the Spanish language. In concert with the missionary himself the board selected Tampico, on the Gulf coast, as our station, to which Mr. Pressley repaired in December, 1879, where he yet remains, operating at first under many discouragements, but now with some success.

The present condition of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South may be safely estimated by the condition of the

#### THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

Nearly all the Christian denominations in the world regard a theological school as necessary in order to the effective accomplishment of their work. No one who will give the subject a moment's serious thought, will deny that some training is necessary in order to prepare an individual for the efficient work of the gospel ministry. The individual whom we may reasonably expect to succeed as a preacher of the gospel must be endowed by nature with certain intellectual abilities, and those abilities must be cultivated and developed. Without piety and the call of God to the work, no man dare, with impunity, engage in the official work of preaching the gospel.



However essential piety may be to the minister of the gospel, this, of itself, is not enough. No one will claim that it is the duty of every pious individual to administer the sacraments and discharge the many other duties which none deny God has assigned to ministers of the gospel. Such a theory bears the marks of glaring absurdity upon its face. Piety and the call of God to the work, it is admitted, are absolute prerequisites to the individual who would engage in preaching the gospel. In addition, however, to this, a correct and extensive knowledge of the Scriptures and of human nature are necessary. This knowledge can be acquired only by long and close study and accurate observation. No man is born with an intuitive knowledge of the Scriptures. God gives His people the illumination of the Holy Spirit; but the illumination of the Holy Spirit goes no further than the Word of God. No new facts are revealed by the Spirit. The truths revealed in the Scriptures are, by the illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit upon the mind, disclosed and made known. This revelation, however, comes not miraculously, but in the use of the means of divine appointment. Such being the case, some human training is necessary in order to be able to discharge successfully and with the divine approbation the official work of a minister of the gospel.

With such convictions of duty the fathers of the Associate Presbytery in Scotland, of the Associate Presbytery, of the Associate Reformed Synod, and of the Reformed Synod in America each set about at an early period to found, equip and maintain a theological seminary. The Associate Reformed Synod of the South followed their example in this particular. Drs. John Hemphill and John T. Pressley were the first professors. After the death of the former and removal of the latter, the work of training candidates for the gospel ministry was entrusted, in part, by the presbyteries to pastors. Those not studying under their pastors repaired generally to the theological seminaries of the North and Northwest.

When Erskine College was founded, the theological seminary was removed to Due West. Dr. E. E. Pressley was elected President of the College and Professor of Theology; and although he resigned the presidency of the college in 1846, his connection with the theological seminary continued until the time of his death, in 1860.



In 1840, Dr. James P. Pressley was elected Professor of Languages in Erskine College, and "to take part in the theological department." In 1847, Dr. R. C. Grier was elected President of Erskine College, and, in 1848, Dr. W. R. Hemphill was chosen Professor of the Latin Language.

The various labors and duties of the theological professors were performed by these men, in addition to their college duties, from the time of their connection with Erskine College until everything was thrown into confusion by the war. Dr. E. E. Pressley was Professor of Hebrew; Dr. James P. Pressley was Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology; Dr. R. C. Grier was Professor of Biblical Literature and Criticism, and Dr. W. R. Hemphill was Professor of Ecclesiastical History.

When, after the close of the war, Erskine College resumed operation, the theological seminary was revived, and continued to do its work after the same general plan which had been adopted many years before.

The number of students for a number of years was small. This was not strange.

At the meeting of the Synod, in 1869, the Committee on the Theological Seminary made the following recommendation, which was adopted, viz.:

"That Dr. R. C. Grier and James P. Pressley devote a portion of their labors to the theological department, as formerly; and that Dr. James Boyce be elected permanent professor, and that they divide the labors among themselves for the present.

It was not the will of the Head of the Church that this arrangement, wise and prudent as it apparently was, should be of long continuation. Death invaded the faculty, and in less than ten years Dr. Boyce was left alone.

The venerable Dr. E. E. Pressley died in 1860. He was not spared to see the two institutions—Erskine College and the Theological Seminary—which he assisted in founding, and for whose growth and prosperity he labored for more than a quarter of a century, torn to pieces by the bloody hand of war. Drs. James P. Pressley and R. C. Grier were spared to see desolation sweep over all the institutions of both Church and State, and then to see the return of peace. But in 1871, the Associate



Reformed Synod of the South was called to mourn the loss of Dr. Grier, and in 1877, Dr. J. P. Pressley was translated from the church militant to the church triumphant.

Dr. Grier was in the prime of life, and in the midst of great usefulness; Dr. Pressley was full of years and worn out with labors.

After the death of Drs. Grier and Pressley, Drs. W. M. Grier and Revs. E. L. Patton and W. L. Pressley shared with Dr. Boyce the labors of the Theological Seminary. Such is the present arrangement.

There is no more correct way to judge of the intrinsic worth of any institution than by the results which it has accomplished. If we estimate the worth of the Theological Seminary of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South by what it has done and is doing, it will compare favorably with any similar institution in the land. It is true there is no massive structure which is called the Seminary building; there is no library with its several hundred thousand volumes; there are not professors' houses richly furnished, but there is everything that is absolutely necessary to the acquiring a correct and thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. It may be said without boasting that the young men who have graduated from Erskine College and studied theology in the Theological Seminary at Due West since the close of the war, will compare favorably with those who have been educated in other literary colleges and theological seminaries.

About forty years ago the Associate Reformed Synod of the South began the publication of a religious periodical—*The Christian Magazine of the South*. The first number was issued from the press in January, 1843. After a successful career of nine years the *Christian Magazine* and *Erskine Miscellany*, which was begun in 1850, were consolidated. After a few years the name *Erskine Miscellany* was exchanged for "*The Due West Telescope*." During the war the *Telescope*, forced by surrounding circumstances, suspended publication. Shortly after the restoration of peace, its publication was resumed with the more significant and appropriate name, "*Associate Reformed Presbyterian*." The *Christian Magazine of the South*, during its



existence, and the *Erskine Miscellany*, after the consolidation of the two publications, have ever been regarded as the organs of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South.

The *Associate Reformed Presbyterian* is simply a continuation of the *Due West Telescope*, and the *Due West Telescope* was simply a continuation of the *Erskine Miscellany*.

Dr. James Boyce, as editor and proprietor, began the publication of the *Christian Magazine of the South* in January, 1843, and continued in that capacity, without interruption, for a period of nine years; the last number being issued from the press in December, 1851.

Dr. John I. Bonner was connected with the *Associate Reformed Presbyterian* from the time of its founding until the time of his death, in April, 1881. At first there were associated with him Drs. J. O. Lindsay and W. R. Hemphill, but for many years Dr. Bonner was sole editor and proprietor, and under his immediate supervision the paper was published.

After his death Rev. Dr. W. M. Grier and Mr. J. B. Bonner became proprietors of the *Associate Reformed Presbyterian*—Dr. Grier being editor in connection with Dr. Boyce and Professor Patton as associate editors. The paper is now (1882) in its thirtieth year, having suspended publication during and immediately after the close of the war for about two years.

#### DUE WEST FEMALE COLLEGE.

About the year 1859, or perhaps earlier, a few individuals in and near the village of Due West, and generally in connection with the Associate Reformed Church, conceived the idea of founding an institution in which females might be thoroughly educated. Sufficient funds were raised, and in the fall of 1859 the organization was completed. The first session opened on the second Monday of January, 1860, and in December of the same year a charter was obtained. The name DUE WEST FEMALE COLLEGE was given it.

Its first faculty consisted of the following persons: Rev. J. I. Bonner, D. D., president; Rev. J. Galloway, Miss E. McQuerns, and Miss Sallie McBride.



Dr. Bonner remained in the position of president until his death in April, 1881. Miss McQuerns is still connected with the college, though she has passed her four-score years.

It will thus be seen that the college has been in existence more than twenty years. From the very first day of its life it has aimed to do good, faithful work, and the public appreciation of the institution, as measured by its full attendance, is the very best evidence of its success in carrying out this, the original plan and purpose of its founders.

The college has no denominational connection whatsoever. It is the property of a few individuals who have put their means into it, not so much for the pecuniary reward which they may reap from the investment, but as meeting a felt want and as an agency for good in the general elevation and cultivation of society.

The institution has no endowment, but lives from its tuition charges. Its course of study has been gradually enlarged until now it embraces all those branches included in institutions of the first rank. The college has been particularly fortunate in its teachers. These have been earnest, capable and efficient, and thoroughly devoted to their work.

The college building is of brick, large and commodious. The grounds are tastefully laid off in walks, and are every way inviting.

The patronage of the institution has embraced every State from Ohio to Texas, though it is mainly confined to four or five of the South Atlantic States.

It should be mentioned that the college has received handsome gifts from the late Col. D. O. Hawthorne, of Abbeville county, S. C., and the late Mrs. Ann I. Wallace, of Kentucky. Prof. Frederick Smith, who died in the service of the institution as music teacher, willed to the college some twelve hundred dollars of his estate—eleven hundred dollars of this was to be a permanent fund, the interest of which only was to be used.

During the twenty-two years' life of the college it has sent out over two hundred graduates.

It would be a great omission from this brief statement if there were no special mention of the work of Dr. Bonner in promoting the success of the college. He gave to it his un-



wearied energy, his great business tact and his superior administrative ability. He made the college what it is. During the long period of his presidency he was ever devising new schemes for its steady growth and its wider usefulness. When called away from his earthly labors he left the institute established in public favor and with every promise of continued success.

The faculty at present (1882) consists of the following persons:

*President*—Mr. J. P. Kennedy, A. M.

*Vice-Principals*—Miss Kate P. Kennedy, Mrs. L. M. Bonner.

*Teachers*—Miss E. McQuerns, Miss J. V. Le Gal, Miss L. J. Galloway, Miss S. L. Miller, Miss E. L. Pressley, Miss M. E. Hood.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER—Faith and Practice of the Associate Reformed Church—Denominational Standards—The Multitude Always Wrong—The Constitution of the Church is the Bible—Men Do Not Agree in its Interpretation—Creeds Necessary in Order that there may be Harmony—Divisions in the Church to be Deplored—Christian Denominations Duty Bound to Publish their Creeds—Power of Ecclesiastical Courts—Administrative not Legislative Bodies—Dr. Samuel Miller Quoted—Creed of the Associate Reformed Church—Of the Synod of the South—Judicial Acts Passed by the Old Associate Reformed Synod—These Acts Never Repealed—Still in Force in the Associate Reformed Synod of the South—These Acts Endorsed by the Associate Reformed Synod of the South in 1848—Tract of 1871 Quoted—Psalmody and Communion the Distinctive Features of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South.

In this concluding chapter it is proposed to give a plain statement of the faith and practice of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South. This we conceive to be due to the Synod itself, to the Church universal, to those branches of the Church universal which in doctrine, form of government and mode of worship, closely resemble the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, and such information, we suppose, is due to the world.

In judging of the orthodoxy of a Christian denomination we are laid under the necessity of examining into the faith and practice of that denomination as contained in its standards and various judicial testimonies. By these it must be tried. Large numbers give a Christian denomination apparent strength and influence, but unfortunately, for near six thousand years the multitude of the human family have ever embraced a false creed, and spent their days in practising rites and ceremonies interdicted by nature and condemned by God's Word.

The constitution of every Christian denomination undoubtedly is the Bible. All those who reject the Bible as a rule of faith and practice thrust themselves beyond the pale of Christianity, and may be classed with pagans. There is, however, such a thing as adopting in theory the Bible as a rule of faith and practice, and at the same time giving it such interpreta-



tions as strip it of all its heavenly authority. Such being the case, wise and good men for many centuries have regarded creeds and confessions as a necessity. In other words, that there may be harmony in doctrine and uniformity in worship, the great majority of the most devout Christians regard the adoption of a creed formulated by men as essential. It is not claimed for these creeds or confessions, that they are Scripture, but that they are an exhibition of the doctrines taught in the Scriptures. They are summaries of divine truth expressed in human language, and are regarded by those adopting them as being agreeable to and founded upon the Word of God.

All true Christians in every part of the world adopt the Bible as the Word of God and the only rule of faith and practice, but all true Christians do not agree in their interpretations of the Bible. They do not agree as to what the Bible does teach on some important doctrines and practices. In these disagreements they are, we may suppose, honest, but this does not prevent the want of harmony. All Christians agree that the Bible teaches that baptism is one of the sacraments of the New Testament Church, but there is great disagreement among Christians as to the manner in which the ordinance of baptism shall be administered, and to whom it shall be administered. Anabaptists and pedo-Baptists cannot worship together statedly and organically in harmony. The same may be affirmed of Calvinists, Arminians, Pelagians, Arians and Socinians. There are many things which prevent these from being organically one. Their separation may be and is to be deplored, but their union would convert the visible church into a Babel of intolerable confusion. That truth may be preserved and propagated and error suppressed, creeds and confessions are in the present condition of the church necessary. Not only so, but it is the duty of every Christian denomination to publish to the world its creed. This is a duty which each denomination owes to the church militant, and it is a duty that it especially owes to those over whom God, in His holy providence, has given it oversight. It must, however, be kept steadily in mind that these creeds and confessions are not in themselves laws or legislative enactments. This they do not claim to be. Ecclesiastical courts, no matter by what names they may be called, are not legislative bodies. They have no authority to make laws;



their powers and prerogatives are only administrative. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the law book of the church. "A Creed or Confession of Faith," in the language of Dr. Samuel Miller, of Princeton, "is an exhibition in human language of those great doctrines which are believed by the framers of it to be taught in the Holy Scriptures."

When the Associate Reformed Synod was organized, in 1782, it declared that it adopted as its creed the Westminster Confession of Faith, except certain sections which were reserved for future consideration. These sections were considered, amended and, in 1799, adopted. Previous, however, to this time a number of acts were passed by the Synod. These acts were not repealed on the adoption, in 1799, of the Confession of Faith, but remained in full force.

The principal acts passed by the Old Associate Reformed Synod were the following, viz: (1.) An Act concerning Judicial Testimonies; (2.) An Act to amend the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod; (3.) An Act concerning the religious connections of the Synod; (4.) An Act concerning the imputation of the righteousness of Christ; (5.) An Act concerning the covenant of works, in the relation it hath to unbelievers; (6.) An Act concerning the frequent administration of the Lord's Supper; (7.) An Act concerning Psalmody; (8.) An Act concerning faith and justification; (9.) An Act concerning the kingly authority of the Lord Jesus.

These acts were never repealed, but remained a part of the creed of the Old Associate Reformed Synod during its existence. They were retained by the General Synod, and in 1848, they were, by the authority of the Associate Reformed Synod, republished with this endorsement and explanation:

"We do not consider these testimonies as new articles of our Confession; but are elucidations, and more full declarations of some doctrines contained in our received standards, and a testimony against the contrary errors. These being judicial decisions, will serve also to guide the judgment in matters of controversy."

In 1871 the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, after mature deliberation, adopted the following:



## SUMMARY OF DOCTRINES.

I. There is a God, the Maker and Upholder of all things, the Moral Governor and Judge of the world.

II. Man is a dependent creature, endued with a rational and immortal soul, and it is his highest honor and happiness, as well as his bounden duty, to know God, to love, honor and obey Him supremely, and so make His glory his chief end. Though at first created holy and happy, he is now a fallen creature, and in need of salvation.

III. The light of nature is insufficient to give man that knowledge of God and of His will, which is necessary to salvation.

IV. God has given us a revelation of His mind and will, as we need, in the SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, which are the word of God, fully inspired, the only, the perfect and infallible rule of faith and duty, from which nothing must be taken, and to which nothing must be added, either under pretext of tradition or of new revelation.

The Apocrypha is no part of the Sacred Scriptures.

We are to believe and obey the Scriptures, simply because they are the word of God. Human reason is to be employed in tracing their evidence, and in interpreting and applying them.

It is the right and duty of all to read the Scriptures, and therefore they are to be translated into the vernacular tongues of all nations.

All controversies in religion are to be determined by an appeal to the Scriptures; and by them are all religious doctrines and usages to be tried.

V. There is ONE ONLY LIVING AND TRUE GOD; a pure, self-existent and invisible spirit, without body, parts or passions, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth; past finding out, everywhere present, knowing all things, searching all hearts, almighty, all-sufficient, absolutely sovereign, without failure accomplishing His will; perfectly blessed, infinitely glorious, loving righteousness and hating iniquity; delighting in mercy, and the great rewarder of all who diligently seek Him; yet incapable of acquitting the wicked.

VI. In the unity of the Godhead there are THREE PERSONS, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; the same in substance, and equal in power and glory, yet distinguished by their peculiar names, their relations to one another, and their order of operation, especially in the redemption of man—the Father purposing, the Son procuring, and the Holy Spirit applying salvation.

VII. God did from all eternity of his sovereign pleasure, and by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, unchangeably ORDAIN all things that come to pass; yet in such a manner as not to be the author of sin, nor yet do violence to the will of His creatures, who all act without constraint and according to their own free choice. Nor does His decree set aside, but rather establishes, the use of means as they are fixed as well as the end. Nor does it interfere with the impartial distribution of rewards and punishments, inasmuch as it contemplates that as every man acts voluntarily, so he shall be rewarded according to his works. In other words, God from eternity, in perfect wisdom and righteousness, and of His own sovereign accord, fixed the plan of that universe of things,



which, under Him, who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, comes into being, determining to effect by His own positive agency what He does actually thus effect, and to permit what He actually does permit, and to limit and overrule just as He does actually limit and overrule. He is the efficient cause of good only; evil He permits, limits and overrules for good; and His agency in all this is according to an eternal plan freely conceived in His own mind, and that plan is in perfect accordance with the voluntary agency of rational creatures, the operation of second causes, and the principles of impartial justice.

God's decree fixes the eternal destiny of angels and men, but on principles strictly just and benevolent. Good angels are predestinated to life, evil angels to destruction. A part of our apostate race are, of the riches of God's grace, predestinated to obtain life eternal through the mediation of Christ; while the rest are, for their sin, predestinated most justly, as all might have been, to everlasting death.

VIII. Agreeably to His eternal plan, God did out of nothing, by His almighty power, CREATE all things, very good, and angels and men holy and happy; and agreeably to the same plan does, in a most holy, wise and powerful manner, UPHOLD AND GOVERN all things; so that nothing happens by chance, or without the appointment or permission, or independent of the control of our heavenly Father.

IX. When God had created the first man, He entered into a covenant with him, commonly called the COVENANT OF WORKS, in which He generously promised life, not only to him, but to all his posterity with him, on condition of his perfect obedience, at the same time forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, on pain of death.

Adam being a perfect and mature man, was most fit to be our *representative*; and had he obeyed, our happiness would have been secured. The condition was easy, and the prize momentous; but he, being left to his liberty, yielded to the temptation of Satan and disobeyed God; and, being their progenitor and representative, involved the whole race of mankind along with himself in condemnation and ruin.

X. In consequence of this sad fall, all men are *born under the curse*, with unholy and depraved natures, prone to sin, into which they run as soon as they begin to act, subject to the wrath of God, to trouble, affliction and death, and exposed to endless perdition.

XI. Thus fallen, we are *unable* to satisfy the justice of God for our sin, and being *wholly disinclined*, are *utterly unable* to turn truly and heartily from sin to God; but are "dead in trespasses and sins."

XII. God, from all eternity, foreseeing our sin and misery, when He might have left us all to perish, did of His own free grace, determine to save a countless, yet definite number of our fallen race, chosen out of all ages and nations; and for this purpose did enter into a COVENANT OF GRACE with His Only-begotten Son, appointed to be their Redeemer, in which He gave them to Him, that on condition of His assuming their nature, and in it fulfilling the precept and enduring the penalty of the violated law in their room, He might give unto them eternal life.



XIII. In accordance with this arrangement, THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD BECAME MAN, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul—not by the law of natural descent from Adam, but conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and therefore born without sin; and so our Redeemer, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, is, and forever continues to be, both truly God and truly man, in two distinct natures and one person—the *Mediator* between God and men; our *Prophet* to teach us by His word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation; our *Priest* to satisfy Divine Justice for our sins by the sacrifice of Himself, and to make intercession for us; and our *King* to subdue us to Himself, to govern us by His laws and the influence of His grace, and to save us from all our enemies.

XIV. Having assumed human nature, our Redeemer did in it obey, suffer and die in THE ROOM of sinful men as the surety of His elect, for the purpose of satisfying Divine Justice for their sins, and thereby securing their salvation.

XV. The Lord Jesus Christ, as the surety of sinners, not only endured the *penalty*, but also obeyed the *precept* of the broken law in the room of His people. His SURETY RIGHTEOUSNESS consists not only of His sufferings and death, but also of His obedience. The former founds our release from punishment, the latter our title to life.

This righteousness is the *only* ground of the sinner's justification before God. The satisfaction of Christ, being that of an Infinite Person, has *infinite value and efficacy*, so that the chief of sinners can be pardoned and saved through Him.

XVI. This righteousness of Christ is, by the commandment of God our Saviour, to be *proclaimed and offered in the Gospel* to ALL, with the assurance that whosoever believeth shall be saved; and this offer is a sure warrant to every sinner to accept Christ as his Saviour.

XVII. JUSTIFYING FAITH is receiving and resting on this offered righteousness of Christ, to the exclusion of all merit of our own, as the only ground of pardon and acceptance with God; and this faith justifies not through anything meritorious in itself, but only inasmuch as by it we come to possess that offered righteousness which is imputed to every believer. "God imputeth righteousness without works." "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

XVIII. All believers are justified, and they only.—John iii: 35.

XIX. This faith is THE GIFT OF GOD. That same Jesus who died for sinners and rose again, is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and the remission of sins. For this purpose, He has received the gift of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit, by means of the law, convinces us of our sin and misery, and by means of the Gospel enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ; and by His gracious power as the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, quickens our dead souls, renews our wills, and persuades and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ as He is offered to us in the Gospel. Without the special influence of the Spirit, there is no saving faith; no man is a true believer till he is a new creature. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." "Ye must be born again."

XX. True believers are not only justified, but, *adopted* into the family of God, in a peculiar sense His children, "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."



XXI. They are also sanctified by His Spirit; who carrying on the good and holy work begun in their regeneration, continues to renew them more and more after the image of God, so that they are enabled to die unto sin and live unto righteousness. That faith which enriches them with the merits of Christ, unites them to Him also as their living Head and source of spiritual influences, and is itself a sanctifying principle, working by love, purifying the heart and overcoming the world, producing sorrow for and hatred of sin, and leading the soul to delight in the law of God. Renouncing all merit of works, the believer will, nevertheless, be fruitful in good works; but *his* will be a NEW obedience, not yielded from selfishness and slavish fear, or mercenary hope, but flowing from the generous promptings of gratitude and love, and in joyful hope of life eternal as the *gift* of God, through Christ Jesus our Lord.

XXII. From our justification, adoption and sanctification flow peace of conscience, assurance of God's love, and joy in the Holy Ghost; so that the religion of the Saviour, when His grace and love are received into the heart, is pleasant, peaceful, and joyous. His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.

XXIII. The immutability of God's love, the stability of the covenant of grace, the perfection of Christ's merits, the prevalence of His intercession, the almighty power and grace of the Spirit as the Sanctifier, and the sure promises of God in Jesus Christ, afford a sure guarantee, that all true believers shall PERSEVERE and grow in grace to the end.

XXIV. Believers are subject to affliction and death; but these come not as a curse, but as God's fatherly chastisements, to correct and purify. Death, which seals the perdition of the ungodly, is to *them* the means of complete and final release from sin and sorrow. Their spirits go immediately to be with Christ, in a state of conscious activity and enjoyment. Their bodies sleep in union with the Saviour, the heirs of a glorious resurrection.

XXV. There shall be a RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, both of the just and of the unjust. The former shall rise clothed with the righteousness of Christ and perfectly sanctified, prepared for the everlasting inheritance of the saints in light; the latter shall be raised in all their depravity and guilt, vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.

XXVI. The resurrection shall be followed by THE GENERAL JUDGMENT, in which all shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and receive according to their works. The righteous, as in the merits of Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, shall be owned and approved as the children and friends of God, and invited to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world; the unbelieving and impenitent, remaining in all their unatoned guilt and uncured depravity, shall be commanded to depart into everlasting fire.

XXVII. The blessedness of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked, shall be EVERLASTING.

XXVIII. From all this it follows, that salvation is WHOLLY OF GRACE. Man is undeserving and helpless. Rich and sovereign grace appoints sinners to be heirs of salvation; provides a Redeemer; furnishes a justifying righteousness; grants pardon through it; gives the Spirit, and that holiness and peace of which He is the author; and, finally, bestows eternal life. Faith, repentance and good works are our duty; but yet they are the fruits of the Spirit, by whose grace alone, working in us both to will and to do, we are enabled to believe, repent,



and do anything good and acceptable with God. They are therefore not meritorious; and the life of the Christian is one of constant and humble dependence on the righteousness of Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit.

XXIX. THE LAW OF GOD is to be viewed both as a *covenant of works* and as a *rule of life*. As a covenant, Adam broke it, and its curse is upon all his posterity; but Christ fulfilled all its demands, and thereby all believers are delivered from it and from all its claims. "Ye are not under the law, but under grace." But as a rule of duty, it is of universal and perpetual obligation, a standard of perfection to which we must be conformed if we would be like God and prepared for His presence.

XXX. THE MEANS OF GRACE are divinely appointed channels through which Christ communicates the benefits of His redemption. Through them the believer seeks, and by faith receives of the fullness of Christ. They are not grace, but only the means of grace. Their efficacy depends on the Spirit of God, whose influence is ever to be sought in their observance. They are the *Word*, *Sacraments* and *Prayer*.

XXXI. THE WORD is dispensed by reading and preaching. The Holy Scriptures being given by the inspiration of God, are perfectly adapted as the means of saving instruction; and so is the true and faithful preaching of the Gospel; but it is only the Spirit of God accompanying the Word read and preached with His own demonstration and power, that makes it the effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building saints up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.

Nevertheless, in order that the Word may become thus effectual, we must attend to it with diligence, preparation and prayer, receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts and practice it in our lives.

XXXII. The SACRAMENTS are holy ordinances instituted by Christ as the King and Head of the Church, in which, by visible signs, He and His new covenant blessings are represented, sealed and applied to the believers. A sacrament is not a mere badge of connection with the Church, nor yet a mere sign of spiritual blessings, but a seal and pledge between God and believers, in which God engages to bestow on them all the blessings of the covenant of grace, and they engage to be faithful in keeping covenant with Him. True believers, then, only have a right to the sacraments before God; and visible believers—that is, those who make a credible profession of faith in Christ and obedience to Him—have a right before the Church.

The sacraments are to believers means of salvation; but then it is not from any virtue that is in them, nor in those who dispense them, but only by the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit in them who receive them in the exercise of a living faith.

The Sacraments of the New Testament are *Baptism* and *the Lord's Supper*.

XXXIII. BAPTISM with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, was instituted by Christ, to be the rite by which persons are to be initiated as members of His Church, and signifies and seals union to Christ and participation of His righteousness and grace, and an engagement to be His.

As it specially represents our cleansing from sin by the blood and spirit of Christ, and as the application of these is presented in the Scriptures under the figure of sprinkling and pouring, baptism is rightly administered by sprinkling



or pouring water on the person. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church till they profess faith in Christ and obedience to Him; but infants of parents (one or both) in the visible Church, and in good standing in it, are to be baptized.

XXXIV. THE LORD'S SUPPER is a sacrament in which, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, His death is showed forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but spiritually and by faith, made partakers of Christ in His propitiatory suffering and death, with the benefits thence accruing, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

Before coming to the Lord's table, communicants should *examine* themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon Him, and of their repentance, love, and new obedience, lest, coming unworthily, they should dishonor Christ, and bring guilt and divine displeasure on their own souls.

XXXV. PRAYER is the offering up our desires to God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit, with confessions of sins and thankful acknowledgement of God's mercies.

The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer, but the Lord's prayer is a special guide. With God's Word to direct us, and the promise of the Spirit to help our infirmities, we should not confine ourselves to forms of prayer.

#### OF THE CHURCH AND ITS ORDER.

There is one general Church visible, which is composed of all those throughout the world who profess faith in Christ and obedience to Him, according to the rules of faith and life taught by Christ and His apostles, and of their children.

To this church Christ has given His ministry, word and ordinances, for the maintenance and propagation of His truth, the conversion of sinners, and the sanctification and comfort of believers, until the whole body of His redeemed shall be gathered and perfected at His second coming; and out of this church there is, ordinarily, no ground to hope for salvation. Of this one Catholic, or general Church visible, particular churches are constituent parts, and as such, are sharers in Christ's ministry, word and ordinances. That society only is a constituent part of the Church visible whose members profess faith in Christ and obedience to Him, as before stated. When a society exalts reason above Scripture, denies the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the atonement, and the work of the Holy Spirit, or plainly indulges licentiousness, and radically corrupts the worship of God, it ceases to be a part of the visible Church. The true test of a church is its conformity to the Word of Christ. And particular churches are more or less pure according as they conform in their doctrine, worship and discipline to this Word.

Christ, the Founder, is the only King and Head of the Church, and to Him it belongs to determine her organization, laws, government and worship. These are to be sought in His Word; but subordinate arrangements common to human actions and societies are left to the natural reason and Christian prudence of the church itself, keeping an eye always to the general principles of the Word.



That FORM OF GOVERNMENT which Christ has given in His Word, is, what is commonly called PRESBYTERIAN. Its general features, as presented in the Associate Reformed Church, are:

1st. THREE CLASSES OF OFFICE-BEARERS—*Ministers*, or Presbyters, who have authority to preach and exercise government; *Ruling Elders*, or Presbyters, who are to help in the government of the Church; and *Deacons*, who are to dispense the alms and charities of the Church.

2d. MINISTERS ARE ALL ON A LEVEL; and in church courts the voice of the Ruling Elder is equal to that of the Minister.

3d. A GRADATION OF COURTS, with defined powers, in due subordination, the lower to the higher, viz.:

(1.) The *Session*, composed of the Minister (Pastor) and Ruling Elders of a particular congregation; to receive members and watch over their spiritual interests. The people choose their own Pastors and Elders.

(2.) The *Presbytery*, consisting of all the ordained Ministers, and a Ruling Elder from each congregation, within certain bounds, to watch over the interests of congregations, receive and direct students of divinity, and license and ordain them to the ministry.

(3.) The *Synod*, embracing several Presbyteries, and composed of all the Ministers and a Ruling Elder from each congregation in those Presbyteries; to exercise inspection over Presbyteries, and adopt regulations for their common benefit.

The object of government in the Church is order, purity, peace and efficiency. As the visible Church is a society of imperfect persons, and it must needs be that offenses come, government implies DISCIPLINE. Causes of discipline are called *scandals* or *offenses*, that is, whatever mars edification, such as dangerous principles, unholy practices, and neglect of the means of grace. The end of discipline is to vindicate the honor of Christ, maintain the moral energy of His institutions, avert His displeasure, preserve the purity of His church, and reclaim the offender. In all private difficulties, members are required to pursue the course enjoined by the Saviour, in Matthew xviii: 15-17.

#### ADMISSION OF MEMBERS.

Applicants are to be examined by the Minister, or by one or more of the Ruling Elders acting with him, as to their knowledge, faith and piety; and when persons wish to join, they can intimate their desire either to the Minister or one of the Elders, who are to be ever ready to converse with inquirers. While persons should strive to be well acquainted with the truths of the Gospel, yet great knowledge is not demanded, provided the applicant entertains just views of his condition as a sinner, and of Christ as a Saviour, and gives evidence of a sincere and teachable spirit and a willingness to bear the yoke of Christ.

#### THE DUTIES EXPECTED OF CHURCH MEMBERS

Are, besides soundness in the faith and an upright walk and conversation, regular and punctual attendance on social and public worship; keeping holy the Sabbath; daily reading of the Scriptures and secret prayer; family worship, conducted by singing God's praise, reading His Word, and prayer, in the presence of the whole family, collected together in an orderly manner; care to in-



struct children and domestics in the principles of religion, and by both precept and example, and the temperate, yet firm exercise of parental authority, to train them in the right ways of the Lord; and contributing to support and extend the Gospel.

These we hold in common with the Presbyterian and most of the Reformed churches.

In addition to these, we hold to certain tenets called "*distinctive principles*," which relate to Psalmody and Communion.

#### ON PSALMODY.

"It is the will of God, that the sacred songs contained in the Book of Psalms be sung in His worship, both public and private, to the end of the world; and the rich variety and perfect purity of their matter, the blessing of God upon them in every age, and the edification of the church thence arising, set the propriety of singing them in a convincing light; nor shall any human composes be sung in any of the Associate Reformed churches." This regulation not only asserts the propriety of singing the Psalms in Christian worship, but forbids the use of human composes, and is supported by the following, among other considerations:

1. The Book of Psalms is a portion of the Word of God, and is, therefore, the truth most pure; human productions may, and often do contain error.

2. The true idea of *praise* is the celebration of God's perfections and work; this the Infinite God, who only knows Himself can express inconceivably better than man, and we should reverently leave the expression of it to Him.

3. God has appointed the Book of Psalms to be used in His praise; human composes are unauthorized.

4. When we lay aside God's own inspired Psalter in order to use man's in the room of it, we seem to dishonor God and give man the preference.

5. The hymn books prepared by churches are *sectarian*, give prominence to their peculiar dogmas, and thereby perpetuate the divisions of the church; the Book of Psalms, like the Bible of which it is a part, is common ground on which the whole visible church may stand.

#### ON COMMUNION.

The doctrine of the Associate Reformed Church is thus stated in her Confession: "Saints by profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification, as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus."

"Saints by profession," or those "who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus," are not all who call themselves Christians, but those who profess faith in Christ and obedience to Him, according to the rules of faith and life taught in His Word. Difference of country, government, language or denomination should not restrain Christian charity in communicating relief in outward things, nor in rendering those mutual spiritual services which Christians owe one another; nor yet in joining in the worship of God, as in prayer, praise, reading and hearing His Word, and even at the Lord's table, so far as is consistent with edifica-



tion. But the end of Christian communion is "EDIFICATION," that is, the building up of the church and its members in grace and holiness; and the *means* by which Christ edifies, or builds up, His people and His church are *the sound principles of His Gospel, His ordinances in their purity and integrity, and faithful discipline*. Whatever corrupts and impairs these means mars edification. Communion, therefore, should not be extended where extending it would give countenance to dangerous error, corrupt worship, or sin. To admit to the Lord's table individuals holding to error, or corrupt worship, or notoriously belonging to societies which so hold, would have this effect. To guard against this, it is necessary for the church to have *explicit terms of communion*, setting forth the doctrines of Christ and the worship and order of His house. These should be faithfully maintained; and the church cannot consistently admit to membership those who are hostile to her principles, nor to occasional communion at the Lord's table those who cannot be received into regular membership. It would be very inconsistent, for example, to exclude A when he had applied to join, or to cast him out of the church because he holds a certain error, and then afterward admit him to the Lord's table, because he has now joined and belongs to a church holding the very same error. By thus refusing communion with individuals and churches in error, we do not unchurch, but only testify against their departure from the faith, in hope that they may come to repentance according to the apostolic direction, "If any man obey not our word by the epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed; yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

The doctrines contained in the preceding summary are the same in substance as those contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and, if the views expressed on Psalmody and Communion be excepted, they are in the main the doctrines of all strict Presbyterians in every part of the world.

With propriety it may be said that the belief and practice of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South with regard to Psalmody and Communion, constitute its *distinctive features* when compared with the majority of other Presbyterian bodies. The doctrinal views and practices of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South on the subjects of Psalmody and Communion are in harmony with the views and practices of both the Reformed Presbyterians and United Presbyterian Churches. So far as doctrine and practice are concerned, the Associate Reformed Synod of the South and the Reformed Presbyterian Church have retained more of the Scotch type of Presbyterianism, as it existed prior to the reign of Charles II., than any other branch of the Presbyterian Church in America. Every other denomination of Christians became, at an early period, Americanized. Many of the forms of worship and formulas of doctrine, once common in the Church of Scotland,



were, by the majority of American Presbyterians, laid aside at an early period, and are now obsolete. The type of Scotch Presbyterianism has been largely retained by the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, and this has always placed the denomination in striking contrast with all other Christian denominations in the South.

The Associate Reformed people in connection with the Synod of the South have ever clung with an ardent devotion to the Bible and Westminster Confession of Faith. With them the Bible is first, and the Confession of Faith second. They are slow to give up old principles and practices, and always regard with a degree of suspicion those who either ignore or remove the ancient land-marks of religion.









40















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